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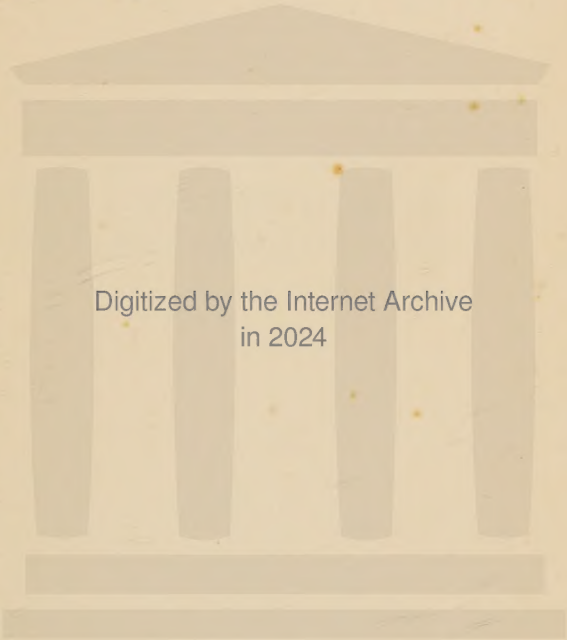

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THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SIN AND ORIGINAL SIN

By the same Author

A THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION
TO THE
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SIN AND ORIGINAL SIN

IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE

Being the Pringle-Stuart Lectures for 1921 delivered at Keble College, Oxford

BY

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PREFACE

By the kind invitation of the Warden of Keble I was invited to deliver the lectures on the Pringle-Stuart foundation for 1921. This book is the lectures so delivered at Keble College in the summer term of that year, with slight alterations. In treating of the Christian idea of sin, I have avoided as far as possible those aspects of its history of which a full and satisfactory treatment has recently been given elsewhere. Thus I have only alluded to the chief points of the Pelagian controversy, since an admirable study of St. Augustine's position has been given by Canon Lacey in the first of these series of lectures, published under the title of 'Nature, Miracle, and Sin,' and many adequate histories of the controversy can be found. Again Dr. Tennant has given a detailed account of the teaching of post-canonical Jewish writings of the early Fathers on the origin of sin. May I take this opportunity of expressing my own great obligation to Dr. Tennant's books, though at times I am unable to accept his position? All Christian teachers owe him a debt of gratitude for his pioneer work and his reverent and fearless attempt to restate old truths in the light of modern knowledge.

I have made bold to publish these lectures in the belief that they will fill a gap. It would appear that modern psychology has shed new light on the material of sin as consisting of misdirected instinct, and has made possible a fresh interpretation of original sin, as moral disease, due to the misshaping of the individual mind by bad social environment. If this is accepted, we get only one more instance of the fact that the traditional doctrines of the Church prove in the long run to be more fully in accord with a completer knowledge of the truth than the popular denials of them. I have also attempted to show that Christianity provides the exact remedy that sin requires.

It is, I think, important to grasp that any real doctrine of sin carries with it certain psychological and, still more, certain philosophical implications. In dwelling on this I have been compelled to wander over a wide field, and to make many assertions which may be felt to need a further defence. I can only appeal to the reader's charity to believe that I am not unaware of this, and that silence on these matters is not due to ignorance or dogmatism, but to want of space. I refer in the course of the book to several modern writers, to which I am most conscious of being indebted.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Christian idea of sin is essentially a religious idea. It implies a relationship to God. Hence any attempt to discuss the nature and meaning of sin that forgets or minimises its Godward aspect cannot satisfy the Christian consciousness. To an atheist the idea of sin can only be an ecclesiastical delusion. He may recognise the existence of moral evil as a problem for ethics or the existence of crime as a problem for political philosophy. He may be able to define sin as he would define any other fiction of the human mind—as, for instance, a centaur—but the term can have no real meaning for him. It corresponds to nothing that has actual existence. It must be explained away. One reason why many modern discussions of sin are unsatisfactory is that even Christian writers attempt to isolate sin from its relation to God. As Christians we protest that a sound theology can never be assisted by provisional lapses into naturalism and that the full meaning of sin must always elude the temporary atheist.

Again, the problem of sin is, in the first instance, a problem of religion as opposed not only to ethics or politics, but to theology. Any treatment of good or evil as subjects for merely theoretical

discussion runs the risk of blurring the distinction between them. Evil is primarily an enemy to be fought and conquered. To regard it in any other way is really to evade the problem. A solution that is not a practical solution is no real solution at all. When evil is viewed as sin against God this becomes doubly true. For religion the primary demand is for deliverance and restoration to fellowship with God. Christianity offers, in the first instance, a remedy for sin, not an explanation of it. Here, as always, a theology is necessary, but only in the wake of religion. Christian insistence on the gravity of sin can only be intelligible to those who are fighting against it. To the non-combatant critic Christians always seem to be making an unnecessary fuss about nothing.

These two thoughts control the treatment of sin in these lectures. The first two deal with the ideas of ' actual ' and ' original ' sin, and the treatment is largely historical. The three subsequent lectures discuss some of the problems of psychology and philosophy that are involved in the idea of sin. This leads up to a discussion of the belief in the ' fall ' of man in the sixth lecture. The last deals with the Gospel as containing God's remedy for the practical problem of sin.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF SIN AND ORIGINAL SIN

LECTURE I

ACTUAL SIN

The Christian doctrine of sin, as it appears in the New Testament, springs out of the Old Testament doctrine of sin. This again has a long history behind it. We must begin by summarising its development.

Among the early Hebrews, as among all primitive peoples, sin was simply that which offended God. Disaster or sickness was regarded as the sign that God was angry, and search had to be made, if necessary, to discover what sin had offended Him and who had committed it. The deity of the savage is as fitful and capricious a being as the savage himself. His disapproval is often arbitrary. In the early stages of society sin and crime are hardly yet distinguished. Sin is practically co-extensive with the violation of tribal custom, which is viewed as expressing the will of the deity and being under his protection. In the ancient story of Exodus iv. 24–26 we may find an illustration of these principles. God met Moses and

'sought to kill him.' In other words, Moses fell dangerously ill, and his illness was interpreted as a sign that Jehovah was offended. It was left to Zipporah's wits to discover the cause. This was found in the neglect of the tribal custom of circumcision by Moses, whether for himself or his son is not quite clear. Jehovah's wrath was appeased by the performance of the right action.

Further, the idea of sin in primitive times is limited in two ways. First, primitive thought deals with sins rather than sin. A sin is a definite and outward act, either the performance of what custom forbids or the failure to perform what custom enjoins. There is as yet no reference to inward desire or intention. Ignorance is no plea. By the mere fact of having committed the deed the doer is a sinner, and a sinner he remains until the sin is expiated. Œdipus, for example, in the Greek story is guilty even though he sinned in ignorance and had done his best to avoid the act. Secondly, the conception of individuality is undeveloped. The unit for religion, as for all life, is the family or the clan. Hence when the god is offended and punishes the offence by misfortune of some kind, no sense of injustice is caused if the punishment lights, not on the offender, but on the community to which he belongs. When Achan's sin brings defeat on Israel, his family are included in the punishment.[1]

Traces of ideas such as these are to be found in many of the earliest parts of the Old Testament.

[1] Joshua vii.

It is necessary to insist that they do not correspond with the fuller revelation in Christ. But it is more important for our purpose to notice how they are gradually transcended under the influence of the prophets. As men gained a fuller revelation of the character of Jehovah, so the idea of sin was purified and deepened. Sin is still that which offends God. But God's disapproval is no longer arbitrary. He is a righteous God. His commands are for the highest good of His people always. His supreme demand from man is not for the punctilious performance of external actions, but for mercy and righteousness. And again He looks not only at the outward act, but searches the heart. Sin begins to include not only outward acts, but inward intention. 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'[1] So, too, from the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the individual begins to come to his own. The idea of national or corporate sin is in no way weakened, but side by side there has emerged the conviction of individual responsibility to God. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'[2] A righteous member of an unrighteous nation can be acceptable to God. This growth of individual religion reinforces the growing sense of the inwardness of sin.

In the Psalms we find the Old Testament idea of sin in its most spiritual form. In such a Psalm as the fifty-first sin is felt to be personal disobedience

[1] Micah vi. 8. [2] Ezekiel xviii. 4.

to a good and holy God. Whatever damage a man's sin may have done to the community or to his neighbour or to himself, the thought of it is swallowed up in the sense of what it means to God. 'Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned.' In his attitude to sin the Psalmist places himself on God's side and asks not to be let off punishment, but for a new heart which will make possible a restored fellowship with God. The supreme penalty is the loss of the presence of God. Sin is no longer viewed as a mere external action; it is rather the sinful heart and character that the Psalmist has in mind. It is seemingly compared to leprosy, as being a consuming disease of the soul. And God's disapproval is no longer a merely external judgment: it is confirmed by the sinner's highest self. 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.' In Psalms such as this, where we are allowed to overhear the prayers of the saints of the old covenant, we can see what sin had come to mean to religion at its highest.

No doubt even to the end Judaism retained much of the old legalistic idea of sin. It was one of the results of the place that the Law came to hold. In the priestly code many of the regulations coming down from primitive times confuse moral and ceremonial purity. A man might easily become unclean unwittingly. A 'sin offering' is still required for a woman after child-birth. We do, however, find the distinction between unintentional sins and sins committed with a high hand.[1] The

[1] Numbers xv. 29–30.

teaching of the Law about sin must be judged by the upward tendency that it represents as compared with earlier codes, rather than by the actual development that it attained. At least it succeeded in bringing home to the mass of the people some conception of God's holiness, when the prophets had failed.[1]

The teaching of Christ consummates that purification and deepening of the idea of sin whose course we have briefly traced in the Old Testament. He gives no definition of sin. He deals more often with particular sins than sins in general. He corrects the current estimate of sins. Yet His discourses and parables imply a definite idea of sin.

The leading characteristic of His teaching on sin is that He puts it into relation with the holy love of God for every individual soul and for all mankind. God is pre-eminently the Father, the Father alike of Israel and of each human soul. As Father, God pierces behind the outward action to the state of heart and will from which it springs. Sin is at bottom the refusal of trust and obedience on the part of the child to the all-wise and all-loving Father. The truest illustrations of its meaning are to be found in the home. Imagine the perfect father. His commands are not arbitrary, but spring from a desire for his child's highest welfare. They are guided by an experience and an insight that the child cannot yet possess. In this home there are many

[1] On the O.T. doctrine of sin, see article 'Sin' (Hebrew and Jewish) in Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. xi.; Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 281 ff.; Davidson, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 203 ff.

children, but no favourites. The welfare of all is bound up with the welfare of each. The love and confidence for which the Father asks is in complete harmony with the love of the brethren. In glad obedience all alike will find their own true satisfaction and also forward the true happiness of others. In the parable of the Prodigal Son each brother in turn cuts himself off from the joy and fellowship of the home, the one by his desire to possess for himself and to be free from all restraints, the other by his sullen refusal to share the largeness of the Father's heart. Sin is still that of which God disapproves, but its whole meaning has become transfigured in the light of God's fatherly love. No doubt in the Old Testament we find anticipations of this view, but Christ first made the thought of God's holy love the controlling factor in the idea of sin.

The freshness of this standpoint can be best appreciated when we contrast the teaching of Christ with the current ideas of contemporary Judaism. As a result of the growing predominance of the Law since Maccabean days, the Jews increasingly came to construe man's relation to God in legal terms. Sin tended to become a series of individual acts, the running up a debt with God. Further, the consequence of the development of oral tradition as an attempt to apply the Law to every possible situation of life led to a tendency to confuse sin with ignorance. The sinner was the man who had not learnt the right application of the Law to this or that problem of conduct, and so did not know how to please God by doing the right thing. Holiness

became confused with correctness, and righteousness with religious etiquette. Moreover, the failure to distinguish between moral and ceremonial purity, that Pharisaism served to increase rather than diminish, produced a largely external view of sin. Sins were, so to say, detachable from the sinner.

As against this Christ insisted upon the inwardness of true religion. In His teaching upon eating with unwashen hands He swept away for ever the notion that man could be unfitted for fellowship with God by any merely outward defilement. Sin is no external stain. It resides in the heart and will. 'Perceive ye not that whatever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him? . . . That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed,' and then follows a long list of evil things.[1] So, too, the angry thought, the lustful look, or the evil desire, even though they do not issue in any outward action, are sinful because they express the heart and will of the man.[2] Christ never depreciates the importance of conduct, but He insists that sin is more than a series of sins: it is a corruption of the man's inmost self. It disables him from true life. It cripples his freedom and, in effect, changes him from being a son in the liberty of his Father's house into being a slave to a cruel and alien master.

In the teaching of Christ, just as the thought of God as Father is primary, so the thought of sin as

[1] Mark vii. 18–23.
[2] See especially Matthew v. 20–28.

related to holy love is primary. But the manifold relation in which we stand to God cannot be contained within the limits of a single metaphor. God is not only the Father but the King, the Master, and the Judge. The kingdom of God, whatever doubt there may be about the interpretation of the phrase, holds a large place in Christ's teaching, and a kingdom implies a king. So sin is depicted as rebellion against God, who is bound to punish all disloyalty in His subjects. Or sin is the failure of the servant to render due service to his Master. In one parable, 'The Unforgiving Servant,' sin is even represented as a debt,[1] though it must be observed that the main lesson of the parable is to emphasize the infinity of the debt, our inability to pay it for ourselves, and our dependence upon God's free forgiveness, which is conditioned by our willingness to forgive the tiny debts of our fellowmen. In short, the Fatherhood of God is nothing weak or sentimental. Because His love desires the highest welfare of every soul, He cannot spare it the discipline that it needs, and because He desires the welfare of the whole family He must punish the selfishness of one member that neglects or injures other members. The jealousy of God has a true meaning. If a father were not to be jealous when the love and loyalty due to him alone is withheld and squandered on some unworthy object. it would show that his own love for his child had grown cold. Nor is there anything unworthy in the idea of God's wrath. A father must be angry

[1] Matthew xviii. 21–35.

with all that mars the home. God's wrath is the energy of perfect love against all that threatens the happiness of the loved ones. God's hostility to sin is in no way watered down when He is regarded as the Father. No excuse is given to those who would substitute the ideal of heartiness for the ideal of holiness.

To the Christian, however, the fullest revelation of the meaning of sin is to be found in the Cross. Whatever else the Cross is, it is the showing up of sin. In Christ the goodness and holiness of God were displayed in a human life, and men found His presence so intolerable that they crucified Him. There is the essential nature of sin—incompatibility with God. The awareness of God's presence and claims can never leave men neutral. It compels a decision. It at once discloses and deepens the condition of men's hearts and wills. The Cross is the public manifestation for all time of what we do when we reject God's claims and God's love, and use the power that we possess to silence His voice and banish Him from our lives. It demonstrates that sin is more than a negation, the refusal to attend or to obey; it is active hostility. By the Cross the essential meaning of sin has for ever been laid bare. When we sin, we do our best to stifle all that is divine within us.

It is often said, and said truly, that the Cross destroys sin by showing it to be an offence against holy love. Men cannot go on wounding God when they see how meekly and lovingly He bears the blow. But that is only half the truth. It is well

to remember that Christ spoke of a day to come, when He should come no longer in weakness but in power, and when God's holy love should be disclosed not in the Cross but in wrath and judgment against sin.

In the rest of the New Testament we find the same doctrine of sin. In St. Paul, as we shall see in our next lecture, the term 'sin' is undoubtedly used so as to include more than actual sin. It is applied to conduct and conditions for which the will of the individual is not responsible. But with him actual sin is clearly disobedience to the known will of God. It includes, however, far more than a number of sinful acts or thoughts. The true antithesis to sin is faith—the faith that 'worketh through love,' and faith is a positive attitude of enthusiastic adhesion to God. It is the life of sonship. St. Paul in his stress on faith as opposed to works is a true interpreter of the mind of his Master. In St. John we get the nearest approach to a definition of sin. 'Everyone that doeth sin, doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness.'[1] Again the rest of the Epistle shows that the term is used in no stiff and legal sense. God is love, but love carries with it obligations. No one can rightly claim to live in fellowship with Him unless he is striving to show his love by righteousness and good-will to his fellow-men. Once again, sin is the unfilial attitude. Lawlessness is an offence against the sovereignty of holy love.

If this is the Christian doctrine of sin it contains

[1] 1 John iii. 4.

in itself the answer to the question, What is the punishment of sin? In the plainest manner Christ rebuked the popular error that exceptional suffering is the proof of exceptional sin, or, again, that the victims of some startling misfortune are the peculiar objects of God's anger.[1] The Cross itself witnesses that in the world as we find it, suffering may be not only the lot but the duty of the innocent. On the other hand, He proclaimed that the Jewish nation by its faithlessness to God and its rejection of Himself had merited punishment, and He foretold the certainty of divine judgment on all unrighteousness. There is no contradiction between the two statements. On the Christian view of sin, punishment is inevitable. As St. Augustine insisted, ' peccatum poena peccati '—sin is the punishment of sin. Alienation from God must issue in loss and misery. About this penalty there is nothing arbitrary. Man was created in the image of God—that is, able to know and love God—for only like can know like. This capacity for fellowship with God is an integral part of human nature. Only through exercising it can man become truly and fully man. We to-day more and more view human nature dynamically, not statically. It is not a clear-cut and ready-made entity, as the older theology tended to assume. Rather is it a process. The new-born child possesses not human nature, but the possibility of acquiring it. That possibility is never fully realised in this life. There are in all of us many potentialities that remain

[1] *E.g.* Luke xiii. 1–5.

undeveloped in this world. 'Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.' But growth is conditioned throughout by fellowship with God. Throughout nature the life of any organism is determined by response to environment. Its capacities are limited by its power of response. The wider the environment which it is able to use, the more advanced is its life. When we reach man we reach a being who is able to respond to an environment wider than visible and material things, a spiritual environment that includes God. Human life depends for its maintenance and growth upon its correspondence with God. And this correspondence is no longer anything merely automatic or physical. It transcends the order of being that is studied by biology. It is moral and spiritual. Here for the first time we get the possibility of sin, of wilful refusal to correspond. And sin must weaken that fellowship which conditions all sound and healthy human life. Religion has been defined as 'walking with God.' But two cannot walk together 'except they be agreed.' The child who knows that he has done something of which his parents disapprove feels that a barrier has sprung up between him and them. Hence the disorder that follows sin is its inevitable result, in accordance with moral laws. Apart from God the heart grows cold and the mind darkened. The balance of human nature is upset so that the lower passions get out of control. Such alienation from God breaks up the unity of human life. Its growth is hampered and its direction perverted, because fellowship with God is a necessary

constituent in its nature. Sin is indeed its own punishment. And as we shall see more clearly in our next lecture, the consequences of sin cannot be limited to the sinner. The disorder that follows on alienation from God must spread to other members of the home until the home life is thrown into confusion. So we see that the proper punishment of sin lies within itself. So long as the sinner identifies himself with sin, he is exposed to the wrath of God. The lawlessness and want of peace, the darkness of vision and incapacity for good-will, are all the inevitable consequences that flow from the loss of the inspiration and guidance that fellowship with God bestows. Apart from Him we cannot make right use of this present world, and the world, as misused by the blindness and sinfulness of man, is turned into an instrument of his punishment. It is true indeed that in the individual life we cannot find any proportion between sin and suffering. In any particular case the innocent may suffer far more than the guilty. This is the result of the solidarity of the race. But we can see that, viewed broadly, the disorder that produces suffering is the result of sin, and that if we take a wide view of nations and societies, there is a certain proportion between unrighteousness and suffering. The moral law cannot in the long run be broken with impunity. Further, mysterious as the suffering of the innocent is, it does not impair fellowship of will with God, and God is able in wonderful ways to give faith and courage to bear it and to transform suffering into a means of forwarding His glory. Sin causes

suffering, but suffering borne rightly may be a very sharing of the suffering of Christ.

We have tried above to put into modern dress the truth that Catholic theology expressed in the doctrine that Adam possessed a supernatural endowment, which he forfeited by the Fall. The question was at one time widely discussed whether man's nature was left in itself uncorrupted, but weak as a result of this loss, or whether in itself his nature was corrupted. For us to-day such a controversy is largely meaningless. All sound theology holds that the natural and the supernatural are not two elements side by side, but rather that the supernatural grace that comes from fellowship with God perfects the development of the natural. The natural cannot become all that it has in it to become, without it. Conversely, the supernatural is not the unnatural. It is not an intruder or an addition to an already complete nature. It does not make man an angel or a demigod: it makes him truly human. Man, in virtue of those special capacities that distinguish him from the beasts, can only grow into his true nature by responding to an environment wider than theirs, in ways that are not possible to them. He can only become truly natural in and through the supernatural. That is the plane of life on which alone the problem of sin can arise. On the other hand, when he is cut off from union with God by sin, man does not sink back into being an animal. An unsuccessful man can never be only a successful beast. Here we may join in the protest that has been heard in several quarters of late against

treating the grace of God as, shall we say, a species of divine electricity, a current that can be turned on or off by suitable machinery.[1] 'The infusion of grace,' said Dr. Bright, 'is merely a convenient theological expression for the personal action of the Divine Paraclete.'[2] There is, perhaps, no better definition of grace than the personal influence of God. Once again we find ourselves coming back to the analogy of the home. The remedy for sin is grace. Each term alike finds its best illustration in the home circle. Sin inevitably shuts out grace, just as a child's disobedience shuts out the father's influence. We shall only confuse our minds if we substitute a theology of the engine-room for a theology of the home. For in the picture of the untrustful and disobedient child we find a simple analogy, that awakens a response in all lives, and yet goes deeper to the root of the problem than any statement in terms of philosophy.

Only by becoming as children can we enter the Father's home, and only when we have entered can we appreciate the full enormity of rebellion against the Father's love. The Christian doctrine of sin springs out of the experience of those who have tasted the joy of fellowship with God and with one another through Christ. The vocabulary of the home only has its full meaning for those who know something of the home from inside. As we insisted at the outset, the idea of sin is primarily an idea of religion.

[1] *E.g.*, in the writings of Dr. Oman, or in several contributions to *The Spirit*.

[2] Bright, *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, p. 163.

LECTURE II

ORIGINAL SIN

In our last lecture we considered the idea of actual sin. We saw that within the Old Testament there could be traced a development of the idea. As men received a fuller revelation of the character of God, their idea of sin was deepened and purified. Sin was always in relation to God. It was that which displeased Him, that of which He disapproved. In the light of the fuller knowledge of God, sin was seen to be not merely outward action or a series of outward acts, but a state of the heart and will. Also, as the sense of individuality developed, it carried with it a new sense of personal responsibility. In the teaching of Christ sin is viewed primarily as the alienation of a child from an all-holy and loving Father, the refusal of the trust and obedience that He rightly claims. Further, since man is so constituted that fellowship with God is an indispensable condition of his true growth, the penalty of sin which weakens or destroys that fellowship is inevitably a disordered life, and the disorder which ensues cannot be limited to the actual sinner.

We now approach the difficult question of 'original sin.' The doctrine of original sin is the

attempt to account for the apparently universal presence of sin. As Dr. Mozley wrote, 'Original sin is fundamentally simply universal sin. That is the fact which is at once the evidence and the substance of it. We know that if sin is universal and if there is no instance of a human being without it, universal sin must receive the same interpretation that any other universal does, namely, that it implies a law, in consequence of which it is universal. Nobody supposes that anything takes place universally by chance, accident, or what we call curious coincidence.'[1] Or, to look at it from another point of view, if man was made for fellowship with God, why does he find that fellowship so difficult? He perceives in himself from the earliest years desires and impulses which conflict with the known will of God. We can understand how actual sin disables a man for fellowship with God. In accordance with the law of habit, it forms in him a character out of sympathy with God. But as we look into our own lives we seem to be disqualified for fellowship with God before ever the life of conscious choice begins. We seem to inherit evil inclinations and tastes for what God has forbidden. The problem is not simply that we have passions of our animal nature that need control, but that the will appears universally unable to control them. It appears as if we do not start fair, but with a bias to evil. The root of the difficulty lies in the apparently universal presence of sin in human nature prior to and independent of acts of wrong choice made by

[1] J. B. Mozley, *Lectures and Theological Papers*, p. 136.

the individual. The traditional Christian explanation has been that man inherits a corrupted, or at least a weakened and disordered, nature. This explanation is being to-day widely challenged. In considering it we must distinguish carefully between the facts, the universal sense of moral weakness and alienation from God, and the explanation that has been given of the facts.

In the Old Testament there is no formal doctrine of original sin. The story of Adam's disobedience in the third chapter of Genesis is not explicitly connected either there or elsewhere with the commission of later sins. Indeed, in order to account for the wickedness of the generation before the Flood, quite another story is narrated. In the Canonical Books there is not one undisputed allusion to the fall of Adam. On the other hand, there are confessions of universal human wickedness. 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.' [1] 'There is no man that sinneth not.' [2] 'In thy sight shall no man living be justified.' [3] 'How can man be just with God, or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?' [4] There is a far more widely diffused sense of human depravity than can be gathered from any collection of isolated proof texts. The Psalmist who writes: 'Behold I was shapen (born) in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,' [5] confesses that sin inheres in man from his birth. The Jews recognised the problem of universal estrangement from God, but

[1] Genesis viii. 21. [2] 1 Kings viii. 46.
[3] Psalm cxxx. 3. [4] Job xxv. 4. [5] Psalm li. 5.

as yet attempted no theological explanation of it. The passages quoted above are acknowledgments of what actually is rather than theories of how it came to be.[1]

In the non-canonical writings the next stage is reached. We begin to find attempts to account for the wickedness of mankind. In several cases it is explicitly connected with the disobedience of Adam. In other cases it is connected rather with the story of the union between the sons of God and the daughters of men. Side by side we find the development of an idea, already present in the Old Testament, of an evil impulse in the heart of man. It was held that Adam was created possessing such an evil impulse which readily became the ally of temptation and issued in sin. In short, Judaism by the time of Christ possessed a number of not altogether consistent speculations on the subject. Many authorities hold that the certainty with which the Mishna connects the sinfulness of man with the fall of Adam proves that the idea must be at least as old as the third century B.C. Hence it is unnecessary, and probably incorrect, to suppose that St. Paul borrowed his teaching about Adam from any written book. Rather the uncanonical Jewish books and St. Paul alike borrowed from a well-established Jewish tradition.[2]

[1] For a discussion of the attitude of the Old Testament to universal sin, see Tennant, *The Fall and Original Sin*, chapter iv., especially pp. 100–102.

[2] For the teaching of the uncanonical books, see Tennant, *op. cit.*, cc., v.–ix. For a briefer statement see Thackeray, *The Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, c. ii., or Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, pp. 136–8.

To St. Paul, therefore, let us turn, since all later Christian teaching on this subject is based on his Epistles. The most important passage is Romans v. 12–21, whose opening sentences run thus: 'Wherefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that (ἐφ' ᾧ) all sinned: for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.' The central thought of the whole passage is the parallelism between Adam and Christ. The disobedience of 'the one,' namely Adam, brought sin and death to 'the many.' Even so the one act of righteousness wrought by Christ has brought righteousness and life to the many who close with God's free offer. 'As through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.' It is true that the phrases 'in Adam' and 'in Christ' do not actually occur, but the contrast drawn implicitly in 1 Cor. xv. 22, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' runs all through the passage. All men by their natural birth are 'in Adam,' and, apart from the new life which is received through faith in Christ, in Adam they remain. By faith in Christ men pass from the condition of being in Adam to that of being in Christ. St. Paul, however, is more concerned to dwell upon the blessings won by Christ, and to

exhort men to enjoy them, than he is to expound any doctrine of original sin. His mention of Christ is primary, and his mention of Adam is secondary. We must not treat the passage as if it were a lecture on sin. The real difficulty centres in the words 'because all sinned.' All scholars to-day would agree that ἐφ' ᾧ cannot mean 'in whom'—'in quo,' as the Vulgate translates it, and as Augustine quotes it. It means 'because,' 'for that.' But when and how did all men sin? Ought we to supply the words 'in Adam,' so that the sentence means that when Adam sinned, all men in some sense sinned in him, or does St. Paul only mean that all men have as a matter of fact followed Adam's bad example and fallen into sin, without giving any explanation of why they should have done so? Clearly the former alternative is preferable, because otherwise the parallelism of the context is destroyed. If we go on to ask in what sense did all his descendants sin in Adam, St. Paul gives us no answer. It was an accepted Jewish tradition that they had done so. There are suggestions in contemporary Jewish literature of the view that the connection between Adam's sin and death and the sin and death of his descendants was simply the fiat of God's will. Or again, the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews that Levi paid tithes to Abraham might suggest that Adam's seed existed seminally in him and so shared his sin. It is better, however, to search for a clue to St. Paul's meaning on other lines. If we re-examine the passage we may draw out three points.

First, the idea 'in Adam' must be interpreted by the idea 'in Christ,' and not *vice versa*. It is the latter that is primary to St. Paul's thought. 'In Christ' is commonly said to express St. Paul's doctrine of a mystical union with the living Christ through the Spirit, a union so close that the very death and resurrection of Christ are reproduced in the Christian. That is true, but it is far from the whole truth. We must insist that 'in Christ' includes the thought of membership in the visible body of Christ, the Church. 'As the body is one, and hath many members . . . so also is Christ' (1 Cor. xii. 12). For St. Paul, sharing the fullness of the Christian life, was always mediated by sharing the fellowship of the Christian brotherhood. The idea of a direct personal relation to Christ by faith and the idea of membership in the body of Christ through baptism were separable only in thought. The new life that he experienced in Christ included both. So, if we interpret the unknown by the known, it is at least probable that for St. Paul 'in Adam' would include the idea of membership in an unregenerate race, side by side with the idea of individual humanity. All men sin in Adam because they belong to a race of sinners.

Secondly, sin in this passage is personified. St. Paul beyond all doubt believed in evil spirits tempting men to sin. It would be in the fullest accord both with Jewish and Gentile thought to interpret 'through one man sin entered into the world' as being more than a picturesque way of saying that the first sin was committed. It implies that an

external evil power gained admittance into the world-order. That an evil power once admitted voluntarily cannot be expelled at will, is an idea that could be illustrated from folklore of all ages. And we are told to-day that primitive tales embody a profound philosophy of life.

Thirdly, a careful reading of the passage shows that St. Paul here, as elsewhere, uses 'sin' to include far more than actual sin. He applies the term 'sin' to acts and conditions of will and heart for the badness of which the individual is not personally responsible. As we saw, sin originally meant anything of which God disapproved. This primitive way of viewing acts and characters objectively, and of judging them so far as they fail to conform to the divine standard of perfection, still survives in St. Paul. Sin is for him all that contradicts or falls short of God's purpose. When he wishes to bring in the further idea of personal responsibility he calls it transgression (*παράβασις*) or trespass (*παράπτωμα*) or disobedience. All cases of transgression are cases of sin, but all cases of sin are not cases of transgression. 'Until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.' Adam committed transgression. He did wrong, knowing it to be wrong. His descendants committed acts that were not in accordance with God's purpose for men, and so objectively were sinful, but they did not commit transgression because

they knew no better; they had as yet no consciousness of God's moral law. 'Where there is no law, neither is there transgression.'[1] Further, it is clear that to St. Paul all sin does not involve guilt. He distinguishes between sin that 'is imputed' and sin that is not. Sin only involves guilt or accountability when it is transgression. But at the same time all kinds of sin alike bring with them fatal consequences. The inevitable consequence of such sin, even though it incurs no guilt, is an incapacity for fellowship with God, and the death which is the ultimate and typical result of that disorder of nature which follows on loss of fellowship with God. In short, men from Adam to Moses were suffering from a fatal moral and spiritual disease, though they did not know it. The function of the law as sent by God—for Jews, the law of Moses, for Gentiles, the recognition of a standard, the law of conscience, 'written in their hearts,'[2] was to bring them to a sense of their true condition—'through law cometh the knowledge of sin'[3]—or, in St. Paul's language, to produce transgressions. 'The law came in beside that the trespass might abound.'[4] In other words, it awakened them to a sense of their alienation from God, and held before them the moral ideal, but did not give them power to achieve it. But this new sense of sin was a stage towards restoration.

So, we would suggest, the meaning of the passage

[1] Romans iv. 15.
[2] Romans ii. 15.
[3] Romans iii. 20; *cp.* vii. 7–13.
[4] Romans v. 20; *cp.* Galatians iii. 19.

is this. By Adam's disobedience sin got an entrance into the world of man. Sin, once admitted, blinded men's eyes, and perverted men's hearts, through what we should call bad racial tradition. It incapacitated them for union with God. It led them astray involuntarily from God's purpose and involved them in death. 'In Adam' they died. St. Paul was feeling after the idea of corporate or racial sin, tendencies to evil for which the individual is not personally responsible, but in which he is entangled. Such sin is not imputed. It does not carry with it guilt, but it is a disease of the soul that can only lead to death. It cripples men for their true life as sons of God.[1]

We may mention only to reject without hesitation the view that St. Paul found in the flesh as such the cause of universal sin. The belief that we are tainted because we live in material bodies is Greek, not Jewish. St. Paul's use of the term 'flesh' is derived from the Old Testament. There 'flesh' either stands for the material element in man or expresses the weakness and transitoriness of human nature. In itself it is in no way sinful. In the passage considered above, St. Paul clearly distinguishes between sin and the flesh. But through Adam's trespass sin has entered into it and, taking possession of it, made it its instrument. That is, flesh is not essentially but empirically evil. Adam was originally sinless. He fell

[1] On the interpretation of St. Paul's teaching see Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, especially pp. 143–7; Tennant, *The Fall and Original Sin*, c. xi., and especially on the use of the term 'sin,' Shears, *The Gospel according to St. Paul*, c. i.

by disobedience. For St. Paul the root of sin lies in the will.[1]

From St. Paul we may, for our present purpose, pass to St. Augustine, noting, however, that in the early Fathers there are considerable varieties of opinion about the Fall and its consequences.[2] There were Augustinians before St. Augustine, but he was the first to attempt to formulate a complete system of doctrine on the subject, and his influence on later theology has been enormous. As against the individualism of Pelagius, he was concerned to insist on the solidarity of the race. Men did not merely one by one imitate Adam's bad example, as Pelagius argued. Rather, just as in the individual life, the commission of a sinful act weakens the will and goes to form a sinful habit, so all men inherit a bias to evil, due not to their own actions, but to a corruption of nature traceable in the last resort to Adam's sin. St. Augustine is not content to leave the idea where St. Paul left it. He wishes to be definite where St. Paul is vague. Relying on the mistranslation of Romans v. 12, 'in whom all sinned,' he asserts that all men in some sense sinned in Adam's sin, and therefore shared his guilt. Sometimes he explains this on the lines of the seminal existence of all men in Adam. Elsewhere he adopts a kind of realism which makes not only Adam's nature

[1] For St. Paul's use of the term 'flesh,' see Sanday and Headlam, p. 181; Stevens, *The Theology of the New Testament*, p. 338 ff.; Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, p. 113 ff.

[2] *Cp.* Tennant, *op. cit.*, cc. xii. and xiii.

but Adam's personality to be shared by his descendants. Since no one shows more persuasively than St. Augustine that sin lies in the will, these attempted solutions cannot be regarded as successful, even by himself. Further, unlike St. Paul, he regards guilt as coextensive with sin. The mere receiving of Adam's nature carries with it a share not only in the consequences of his action, but in his guilt. He finds in infant baptism a proof of this. Unbaptised infants, even though they die before they are capable of committing actual sin, are lost. In discussing the transmission of guilt, he is betrayed into the lamentable suggestion that original sin is handed on from parent to child through the act of generation, since under the conditions of fallen humanity there is, even in lawful wedlock, some measure of lust uncontrolled by right reason. Again, in opposing Pelagianism, St. Augustine is led to exaggerate the depravity of fallen man and in effect to deny to him any real power of choice at all. No doubt there are other elements in St. Augustine's writings that mitigate the harshness of this teaching. Even so, it was never accepted in its completeness by the Church, and its opponents have no right to confuse the Catholic doctrine of original sin with the Augustinian presentation of it.[1]

At the Reformation Augustine's doctrine of original sin was developed to its logical conclusions by Calvin, without any of that insistence on counter-truths which softens the teaching of St. Augustine.

[1] For a full examination of St. Augustine's teaching, see Lacey, *Nature, Miracle, and Sin.*

At the Council of Trent the Roman Church accepted a very much modified Augustinianism, based on the teaching of the schoolmen, especially Aquinas. It was content to affirm that the Fall resulted in a loss of supernatural gifts and consequent dissolution of the harmony of man's nature, that free-will has been impaired but not destroyed, and that original sin is transmitted by generation, not by imitation. Our own Anglican Article goes further than the Council of Trent, but refuses to assert that man's nature is wholly corrupt.[1] Up to recent times there has been a general agreement among Christians that man, when he is born into the world, inherits a disordered, or at least a weakened, nature, and that this is due to a 'fall' in the past. This position is now challenged. The whole idea of original sin is said to be obsolete in the light of modern knowledge. There never was an Adam, and he never fell. Even if he had, his fall could not have affected his descendants. And supposing that it could have affected them, it could not produce sin, for sin can only be predicated of voluntary action.[2]

These objections are indeed formidable. They will have to be considered at length in our next lecture.

[1] For a fuller statement see Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles*, pp. 231–3.

[2] See especially Tennant, *The Origin and Propagation of Sin* and *The Concept of Sin*.

LECTURE III

OBJECTIONS TO THE IDEA OF ORIGINAL SIN

In discussing the doctrine of original sin, we must begin by sweeping away one common objection. The validity of the doctrine is entirely independent of the historical value of the third chapter of Genesis. The story of Adam's disobedience is a piece of folklore. In the form in which it has come down to us it has been shaped by the early prophets so as to give an admirable picture of the meaning of actual sin. Adam and Eve are capable of receiving a command. They know the distinction between right and wrong. They acknowledge the will of God as binding on them, and they disobey the command of God. As a lesson in the meaning of sin as disobedience to God, the chapter is admirable, and wakens an echo in all who read it, but it throws no light on the origin of sin in the world. Historical origins can only be proved by historical evidence. Nor is it relevant to our present purpose to discuss the original form of the story or its possible meaning.[1] We are only concerned with it as we find it now in Genesis. It is enough to insist that the frankest recognition that this chapter

[1] On these points see Tennant.

is myth, and not history, in no way disproves the truth of original sin. Nor, again, is it necessary to show that all mankind are descended from a single pair. That is a question for science to investigate, and theology has no right to dispute its verdict, whatever it be. For our present purposes the important truth is that mankind is in a real sense a unity The human race can for many purposes be treated as one And it is a plain fact that sin is widespread, if not universal. The race is one in sin. The facts of experience and history which attest this are entirely independent of the story of Adam. It was because they were so clear, and demanded some explanation, that an explanation was sought in the disobedience of Adam. Putting aside for the moment the question of whether man can be said in any true sense to have fallen, the facts of life certainly suggest that moral evil is as wide as the human race.

At once we are faced with an objection. Have we any right to use the term 'sin' so as to include more than 'actual' sin? Can we in any real sense speak of corporate or racial 'sin'? Or, again, supposing that it is possible to inherit tendencies to evil, have we any right to speak of them as 'sinful'? Dr. Tennant urges that the word 'sin' should be confined to actual sin. Such sin he defines as 'moral imperfection for which an agent is in God's sight accountable.'[1] He wishes to insist on this limitation in order to bring out the exceeding sinfulness of actual sin. Such a

[1] *The Concept of Sin*, p. 245.

definition, he pleads, 'alone safeguards sin from confusion at once with imperfection—with ignorance, with non-moral conative tendencies, with temptation, with unreal counterpart to illusory individual experience. . . . It . . . strikes at the root of morbid self-accusation. . . . It insists more strongly than can any concept of wider and looser meaning upon the responsibility of the sinner for his sin. . . . While pronouncing nothing to be sin but that to which guilt attaches, it unconditionally declares that to every sin there attaches guilt. It refuses to shift one whit of the responsibility for real sin to the subject's environment, the conditions of his life, or his natural endowments. Volition, and volition alone, it declares is sinful. . . . In the light of such a definition of sin as we have formulated, the dictum so much in favour to-day, "to know all is to pardon all" is a thoroughly immoral and unchristian exaggeration. . . . When we have made every allowance that true charity suggests, and have pleaded every extenuating circumstance that knowledge can discover, there remains in much lawless conduct that occurs an element which is not to be explained away, and which it is simply wicked to ignore: namely, the fact of deliberate choosing of the worse when a better course is both known and possible.'[1] We have quoted Dr. Tennant at length because his position has often been attacked unfairly. He has no desire to minimise or deny sin, but he wishes to limit the term to the voluntary conduct of individuals and the moral condition that

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 246–7.

results from it. He gets what he aims at, a logically perfect concept of sin. If we agree to use 'sin' in this sense only, then for the phrase 'original sin' we should have to substitute some other term, such as, perhaps, 'moral disease.'

Dr. Tennant's view is logical and consistent; he succeeds in attaining a clear-cut definition. On the other hand, we may plead that the limitation of the term 'sin' to actual sin, *i.e.* to moral imperfection for which an agent is, in God's sight, accountable, would obscure certain vital elements of truth which the wider use of the term preserves. We must not simplify problems in order to get clear definitions or 'logically perfect concepts.' Life is often wider than logic. Dr. Tennant makes two assumptions. First, he treats sin primarily from the point of view of the moral philosopher. Sin is to him first and foremost moral evil, springing from wrong choice. Its relation to God he treats as secondary. Secondly, his view of sin is purely individualistic: for him sin resides only in the will of the individual. Both these assumptions are open to criticism that seriously weakens his position.

Let us take the first, that sin is primarily moral evil. We must sympathise with many of his objections to the strict Augustinian position. From the standpoint of morality it is unjust that original sin should carry with it personal guilt. A just God cannot blame a man for a condition of will and heart for which he is not responsible. But these objections lose their force when we modify

the teaching of St. Augustine by an appeal to St. Paul. 'Sin is not imputed, where there is no law.' There is abundant Catholic authority for the view that original sin does not involve personal guilt. Dr. F. J. Hall can write, 'The word "sin" in the phrase "original sin," does not signify either actual sin or personal guilt, but is employed in a secondary sense to describe an inherited defect of nature.'[1] Nor, again, can we accept St. Augustine's arguments to prove that we share Adam's guilt. As Dr. Caird observes, 'Rightly construed, the conception of seminal guilt, or of a sin which contains or involves all future sins, if any real meaning could be attached to it, would seem to imply that Adam was guilty of all the sins of his descendants, rather than they of his.'[2] But when we move into regions of life and thought that lie outside the sphere of the moral philosopher, we find that original sin, as a matter of actual fact, disables men for fellowship with God as really as actual sin. It equally contradicts God's will and purpose for us. As such, therefore, it falls under God's condemnation. We must distinguish. God does not condemn the individual for a state or condition for which he is not personally accountable; rather God pities him, as one who suffers from a disease of the soul. But, taken in the abstract, God does hate and condemn the state and condition which shuts out the man from fellowship with Himself. It is only in this abstract sense that original sin can be said

[1] Hall, *The Fall and Original Sin*, p. 134; *cp.* also pp. 194–7.
[2] Caird, *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 211.

to deserve God's wrath.[1] The individual only deserves God's wrath so far as he identifies himself with it.

As we saw, sin historically means simply that of which God disapproves. It is in this sense that St. Paul uses it to cover original sin. A state of moral disease which renders man's life so different from what God intended, clearly falls under this use of the term. It is a misfortune and a handicap, but because it is a state of man's inmost being, he therefore cannot heal himself. To be free from it he needs more than teaching; he needs redemption and new life. He needs reconciliation with God, from whom he has become estranged. There must be repentance, *μετάνοια*, a change of heart and will which he cannot carry through in his own strength. So from the purely religious point of view, because it is a state of the inner man, almost indistinguishable from that of the wilful sinner in all except guilt, and calling for like remedy and deliverance, it may be fitly called original sin. Only when we have been saved from it can we take our true place as children in our Father's house.

Dr. Tennant's second assumption—the purely individual nature of sin—has become curiously out of date since he wrote.

During these last few years we have become familiar with the idea of corporate responsibility and corporate guilt. In the late war we held

[1] *Cp.* R. W. Church, *Life and Letters*, pp. 294–5. It should not be necessary to insist that in Ephesians ii. 3 'children of wrath' merely = 'objects of wrath,' and has no reference to infancy.

Germany as a whole responsible for gross outrages against humanity. Individual Germans, though not personally guilty of such actions, were held to be involved in the shame of their nation. So far as they acquiesced in its crimes, their consent carried with it a share in the national guilt. That is only an illustration of a general principle that has won recognition. Corporate action is more than the sum-total of individual actions. The idea of a corporate mind or corporate will is more than a metaphor. 'We must recognise the existence in a certain sense of non-individual or collective minds. We may fairly define a mind as an organised system of mental or purposive forces: and in the sense so defined every highly organised human society may properly be said to possess a collective mind. For the collective actions which constitute the history of any such society are conditioned by an organisation which can only be described in terms of mind, and which yet is not comprised within the mind of any individual; the society is rather constituted by the system of relations obtaining between the individual minds which are its units of composition. Under any given circumstances the actions of the society are, or may be, very different from the mere sum of the actions with which its several members would react to the situation in the absence of the system of relations which render them a society: or, in other words, the thinking and acting of each man, in so far as he thinks and acts as a member of a society are very different from his thinking and acting as an isolated

individual.'[1] That is the teaching of modern psychology. It needs, no doubt, modification as applied to mankind as a whole, but granted that a community has, even to a rudimentary degree, a collective mind and will, we get the real possibility of collective sin. Such a mind and will either are or are not in accord with the mind and will of God. And when they conflict with God's purpose, it is impossible to assign the due measure of guilt to each member of the community, and yet the responsibility lies among its members, past and present.

From another point of view, it is obvious that a perfect life can only be lived in a perfect society. That is the difficulty of the Sermon on the Mount. The literal carrying out of its precepts requires a perfect society, a community of men all striving to live in accordance with its principles. The individual Christian to-day cannot literally fulfil it: it would not indeed, under present conditions, be possible to do so, because we are living in a sinful world. So we have to adapt its principles to an unideal condition. In other words, full spiritual growth is hampered by our social environment. In short, any idea of sin that limits it to the individual will is inadequate. Dr. Tennant has fallen into the error of Pelagius, an atomic view of humanity. St. Augustine, with all his exaggeration, held fast to a real truth. Sin stretches out farther than the individual will. The term cannot be rightly confined to actual sin. The individual is estranged from God by something wider than his

[1] McDougall, *Psychology* (Home University Library), p. 229.

own personal disobedience. What is needed is something larger than a redemption of individuals.

When we examine the teaching of Christ, we find that He assumes man's universal need of deliverance from moral evil. He formulates no doctrine of original sin, but speaks and acts in a way that implies the truth. He announces that He has come 'not to call the righteous, but sinners,' 'to seek and save the lost.'[1] He includes a petition for forgiveness in the universal prayer.[2] Quite incidentally, and therefore all the more impressively, He speaks of men as 'being evil.'[3] When St. Peter tempts Him, He is said to think 'as a man.'[4] His ministry is more than one of enlightenment and example. It is to be one of deliverance from bondage and redemption from the yoke of an alien power. Men need to be 'ransomed' and 'born again.'[5] The works of healing are signs and pledges of that deeper healing of the whole man that He has come to bring.[6] Men need a physician 'because they are sick.' The remedy that He offers emphasises the seriousness of the disease. There is a necessity that 'He should give His life a ransom for many.' He identifies Himself with the sacrificial offering of the Suffering Servant.[7]

[1] Mark ii. 17; Luke xix. 10.
[2] Matthew vi. 12; Luke xi. 4.
[3] Matthew vii. 11; Luke xi. 13.
[4] Mark viii. 33.
[5] Mark x. 45; *cp.* viii. 36–7; John iii. 3.
[6] *Cp.* Matthew xii. 28; Luke xi. 20; Matthew xi. 4 ff.; Luke vii., 20 ff.
[7] This has been denied in the interests of a particular theory of the Atonement, but all the evidence that we possess goes to support it.

His language is the more remarkable in that He feels no need of healing or forgiveness in His own life. The Prince of this world can find nothing in Him. In a later lecture we shall consider His language about evil spiritual powers, but at least it shows that He speaks of forces hostile to the will of God operating in a wider field than that of the individual will.

Dr. Tennant, however, goes so far as to claim the authority of Christ Himself for limiting the term 'sin' to actual sin. He admits that St. Paul uses it in a wider sense. The evidence that he produces must be judged inadequate to prove his case. It is always difficult to prove a negative. He succeeds, indeed, in quoting words of Christ to show that the gravity of sin varies according to the knowledge of God's will which the doer possesses, but he can only find two passages that even appear to give positive support to his case. Both come from St. John. Christ says to the Pharisees, 'If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; your sin remaineth'; and again to the Jews who rejected Him, 'If I had not come and spoken to them they would not have had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. . . . If I had not done among them the works that none other did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.'[1] These passages are insufficient to bear

[1] John ix. 41 and xv. 22; quoted in the *Concept of Sin*, pp. 30–31. When a Modern Churchman is driven to find evidence for a case in a minute exegesis of a discourse in St. John, we may conjecture that his need is urgent.

the weight of the argument that Dr. Tennant builds on them. What is the meaning of 'they would have had no sin'? It cannot mean they would have been sinless. Clearly it means that they would have been free from sin on this particular point. They would not have been guilty of rejecting Christ after full opportunity. Indeed the sentence, 'Now they have no excuse for their sin,' suggests that there are sins for which there is excuse, which is exactly our contention. We do not find anywhere a formal definition of sin in Christ's teaching. He spoke and taught as an evangelist rather than as a theologian. He came to rouse men to repentance and effort, and to bring deliverance from sin, not to explain it. The illustrations that He uses of the lost sheep, and still more the lost coin, the comparison of sin to sickness, the picture of the enemy sowing tares in the field, all suggest that the unhappy condition in which men find themselves is due to some other cause than the commission of acts of disobedience by a large number of separate individuals. When we combine such teaching with His words that assume the universality of sin, we shall hardly be rash in concluding that His use of the term 'sin' was in extent identical with St. Paul's. It may further be noted that He speaks beyond all doubt of corporate sins when He denounces the cities who have rejected Him.[1]

Assuming, then, the broad truth of original sin, can we speak of its transmission? St. Augustine

[1] Matthew xi. 20–24; Luke x. 13–15.

and the majority of theologians have taught that each man inherits from his parents sinful tendencies, a nature that is disordered. Dr. Tennant argues that this is scientifically impossible. Such tendencies would be of the nature of acquired characteristics, and characteristics acquired during the lifetime of an organism cannot be inherited.[1] Dr. Tennant states this with great confidence, but his position is by no means so secure as his book suggests. An important school of biologists holds that satisfactory evidence has now been produced of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. The whole subject is very complicated and still under discussion. The final decision lies with science. We are content to maintain that whatever be the issue of the debate, the inheritance of evil tendencies can be maintained independently of physical transmission. In any case, no element of our nature can have become intrinsically evil, for God's world does not contain such. Only an evil will is intrinsically evil. Nor, again, can we inherit a sinful tendency in quite the same way as, let us say, a Roman nose or red hair. Rather the balance of our nature as we receive it is upset. We have lost that sympathy with God which should govern and guide the development of our life. In this sense original sin may be inherited through our social environment. The infant that is born into the world is a mere bundle of possibilities. By the time that its moral life becomes possible, its nature has been largely shaped by the influence of our

[1] *The Fall and Original Sin*, pp. 35–8 and 179–83.

social environment. Our mental make-up is to a very large degree conditioned not only by our home and early training but by all the subtle influences that stream around us. If we perforce grow up in social surroundings that reflect the estrangement from God that all men more or less share, we inevitably come to share that estrangement. Our nature lacks its true balance. When once we grasp that human nature does not come into the world ready made, we see that the distinction between nature and nurture is only partially true. Nature is only developed through nurture.

From this standpoint original sin may be described as the devil's counterpart of grace. Grace is God's personal influence. And grace is always mediated directly or indirectly through the divine society, the people of God. Without denying for one moment the possibility of God's direct dealing with the individual soul, we maintain it for a fact that in no narrowly ecclesiastical sense the Church, the body of Christ, is the home of grace. It is in and through the divine society that the child learns the ways of God. The sacred writings, the common worship, the sacraments, all the means of grace, are social. Original sin is the antithesis of this. It acts through all the social influences that drag us down, that implant in our imaginations false ideas of God, that encourage unlawful or anti-social desires, that divert our impulses into wrong channels. Original sin may be in itself a moral weakness, a spiritual handicap, but its ultimate effect is not paralysis,

but disorder. The forces of our nature, uncontrolled by the grace of God, run riot. Man never stands still. If he does not grow right, he grows wrong.

So original sin may be regarded as the movement of the race away from God's purpose. The solidarity of mankind is the condition of all progress : it may equally become the condition of misdirected advance. We cannot escape our share in it. Membership in the union of all men is obligatory. It is indispensable for obtaining not only employment, but manhood. And the individual must share the disabilities as well as the advantages of membership. If we inherit the gains of the past we must also inherit its losses. To quote Dr. McDougall again : ' The aggregate which is a society has, in virtue of its past history, positive qualities which it does not derive from the units which compose it at any one time ; and in virtue of these qualities it acts upon its units in a manner very different from that in which the units as such interact with one another.' [1] No doubt his words receive their completest fulfilment in organised societies, but in their measure they apply to the race as a whole.

To sum up, the common criticisms of the doctrine of original sin are based on an individualistic view of the spiritual nature of man. It is perfectly true that man can only be accounted guilty of actual sin so far as he has apprehended God's will and refused compliance. But man cannot be viewed in abstraction from his social life.

[1] McDougall, *The Group Mind*, p. 7.

Society is prior to the individual. The individual is steeped from his birth in influences that are based on the past history of his kind. He grows up in a moral atmosphere that shapes and colours his whole personality. The purely individualistic conception of man runs counter to the plain facts of experience. Hence it is not only in accord with the historical meaning of the term, but also with the recognition of the organic unity of the race, to refuse to confine sin to the individual will.

Some concept such as that of original sin is an intellectual necessity. And the phrase witnesses to the truth that our present condition of moral weakness is contrary to the purpose of God. It is that which ought not to be, though its existence is due not to our personal transgressions, but to the transgressions of the past, which have infected the life of the race.

We must now consider the relation between sin and the sense of sin. Clearly in actual fact the two do not stand in that direct proportion to one another that we might expect. We must begin with the fully awakened Christian moral consciousness. Within this a distinction must be made between the sense of sin and the sense of guilt. The sense of guilt always includes the sense of sin—that is, the awareness of alienation from God, but it also carries with it the conviction by conscience of being responsible for acts or habits which have led to this alienation. Even here the sense of guilt is not always proportionate to the gravity of the sin.

A man's personal sense of guilt, either at the time of sinning or as he looks back on his sin, is no infallible criterion of his guilt in the sight of God. As we said, the degree of guilt, *i.e.* accountability or blameworthiness, depends not on the objective badness of an action nor on its consequences as such, but on the knowledge and motive of the agent. The same deed committed by two different men may carry with it a very different measure of guilt. Guilt attaches either to a voluntary infringement of God's will, so far as it is known to us, or might have been known but for our own fault, or to a condition of character that is the result of such past infringements. In strict accuracy it should be predicated of the doer rather than the deed. Christ's teaching makes it clear that God judges us according to our opportunities. Servants are punished with many or few stripes, according to their knowledge of their Master's will.[1] Tyre and Sidon will fare better than the cities that, after hearing and seeing Christ, rejected Him. Further, guilt is reckoned by God not in proportion as a man comes short of actual perfection, but as he comes short of the best that was possible for him at the moment. It depends on his failure to live up to the highest that he knows or the refusal to do the right that it lies in his power to choose. What I can do here and now is limited by my present capacities. God does not condemn me because I am as yet undeveloped, except in so far as my want of development is due to my own misconduct.

[1] Luke xii. 47–8.

Since God alone knows the heart, God alone can truly estimate guilt.

That does not mean that for practical purposes we can dispense with the idea of guilt. There have been times when we know for certain that we have committed actual sin. We had the power to choose the right and chose the wrong. We saw God's will and did not do it. We yielded to temptation when we had the power to resist. Our judgment does not depend on the feeling of the moment, but is reinforced by later reflection. And we find that our experience in this matter is corroborated by that of other men, and especially the saints. They are convinced that, like ourselves, they have at times wilfully disobeyed God with their eyes open. It would be untrue to our deepest conviction to explain away all sense of guilt simply because the verdict of our conscience needs to be tested and must always fall short of infallibility.[1] Just as the fact that conscience needs to be trained and educated in giving any moral judgment does not impair its authority or excuse us from striving to attain to moral truth, so the fact that its judgments about guilt may need revision gives us no excuse for refusing to attempt to estimate our guilt. By honest thought and self-examination we can do much. By submitting our case to the decision of others, especially of a trained director, we can approach to a more certain knowledge. When we

[1] This is the position reached by Dr. Orchard in his *Modern Theories of Sin*. He in effect reduces sin to the sense of sin and denies the existence of guilt. See especially pp. 125–6 and 135–6.

have done our best, the final verdict must rest with God.

If, then, we start with the idea of guilt, as apprehended by a fully conscious moral experience, we can draw up a descending scale of cases, in which the degree of guilt becomes increasingly smaller, until we reach a point at which it would seem that the ignorance or moral sickness of the agent is such that little or no guilt attaches to his conduct, though it is undoubtedly sinful in the sense of being contrary to God's will. We can imagine a child allowed or even encouraged to form bad habits. Such are objectively bad. They form a barrier between him and any true service of God. But they partake of the nature of original rather than actual sin, and the child's guilt is infinitesimal. The late Father Dolling, who had every opportunity of studying human nature under unideal conditions, could write thus: 'A man who falls from a height is wounded to death—every limb is shattered, every feature disfigured. He who slips on the pavement by a casual chance pulls himself up and goes on unhurt. Oh, most blessed truth! Our falls in Portsmouth entailed no complete destruction of character, hardly any disfigurement at all. Boys stole because stealing seemed to them the only method of living . . . girls sinned because their mothers had sinned before them—oftentimes their grandmothers too—unconscious of any shame in it, regarding it as a necessary circumstance of life, if they were to live at all. The soul unquickened, the body alone is depraved, and therefore the highest

part is still capable of the most beautiful development.'[1] We are often warned in the New Testament against the unnecessary judging of others. Men stand or fall to God, for He alone knows the measure of guilt. At the same time we must bear in mind that all sin—even original sin—involves guilt somewhere, since sin contradicts God's purpose for human life. The guilt of the man who commits a particular sin may be very small, but the guilt of those who brought into being conditions that caused him to sin may be very great. If all the disorder of the world is ultimately traceable to rebellious human wills, then collectively guilt balances sin. In a real sense we may bear the responsibility for the sins of others.

So, then, the divergence between guilt and the sense of guilt is one aspect of the problem of the education of conscience. The verdict of guilty which, after reflection, we pass on ourselves or on others is a moral judgment. It springs from a sense of guilt, but is not identical with it. The keenness of our sense of guilt depends partly on our temperament, partly on our moral development, partly on the vision of God. If it is dull it may be perhaps that our conscience is as yet far from fully awakened, and that we have only dimly recognised the holy love of God and His demands upon us. Or it may be that our conscience was once awakened and that it has been dulled by the wilful rejection of God. We can, by continued disobedience,

[1] Dolling, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum*, pp. 17–18, quoted in Green, *The Origin of Evil*, p. 199.

silence conscience, and all sloth or indulgence helps to disqualify us for hearing its voice. One of the penalties of sin is to lose the knowledge and hatred of sin. The sense of guilt is often a sign of dawning spiritual life. It proves that even though we have been feeding on husks in a far country, we are coming to ourselves and are aware that we are not really swine, and can still be homesick for the fellowship of our Father's house.

When we turn to the sense of sin as distinguished from the sense of guilt, much of what we have said above still holds good. The sense of sin is often keenest where the sin is least. The saints are most conscious of the horror of sin both in themselves and in the world at large. On the other hand, the open and notorious sinner may be quite unconscious of his alienation from God, and show no signs of distress at his position. The sense of sin as fully developed depends on an awareness of God. It is the growing vision of God that awakens it. Strictly speaking, it should be distinguished from the feeling of imperfection or creaturely unworthiness, though these are closely akin to it. It is rather the consciousness of moral incompatibility with God, a sense of being out of harmony with God and God's purposes. No doubt it often springs from a sense of dissatisfaction with ourselves, or fear of punishment, or mere boredom with life, and these elements are not easily disentangled. But it only becomes a sense of sin in the true meaning of the term when it is brought into relation with God. So viewed, the sense of sin is God's provision against a false

independence. We are so constituted as to be restless and dissatisfied with anything short of the highest life based on union with Him. The sense of sin and the sense of guilt alike prove that God has not left us to ourselves. We should not be aware of our alienation from Him unless He were still seeking us.

LECTURE IV

PSYCHOLOGY AND SIN

BEFORE we begin to consider the bearing of modern psychology upon the idea of sin, it is well to remember that from apostolic days down to the present Christian teachers have availed themselves of current psychology in order to interpret the conflict of the spiritual life and the nature of sin. It is clear that an understanding of the way in which the mind works, and of the laws that govern mental and spiritual health, must be of service to religion. Such knowledge cannot of itself produce spiritual life, but it can guide our efforts in seeking it, and it can assist us to use the best methods in combating evil tendencies and desires. St. Paul, for instance, when he speaks of the 'flesh working against the spirit,' is making use of the psychology of his day for purposes of practical religion. Tertullian, in his 'De Anima,' quite unashamedly bases his teaching on psychology. So, too, St. Augustine's 'Confessions' is in part a psychological study of his own religious experiences.

To-day we are getting a new psychology built up on strictly scientific lines. It differs from the older psychology, both in its methods and in

collecting its material not only from introspection but from the observation of human conduct, including the conduct of savages and undeveloped races. Evidence is sought in the behaviour of animals and in the abnormal mental states of human beings. I say we are *getting* a new psychology ; for we have not yet got it, or rather we have got so many and varied new psychologies that they cannot all be true. The confusion is increased by the fact that each writer tends to use technical phrases in a sense of his own. It is fashionable in certain quarters to argue that the new psychology has disproved the Christian doctrine of sin. The question may well be asked, Which new psychology is meant? At the same time, there are considerable grounds of general agreement, and these we must prepare to face, so far as they affect traditional belief. We may take as a typical book Mr. Tansley's 'New Psychology.'[1] He combines, as he tells us, the view of mind expounded by Dr. McDougall in his 'Social Psychology' with the concepts and methods of the schools of Professor Freud and Dr. Jung. We will begin by giving a rough outline of his general position.

First of all, the new psychology takes a biological view of all mental life. It regards 'mind'—using 'mind' in the widest sense—as a structure built up gradually, by a process of evolution, out of a small number of simple elements, namely, instincts. We are familiar with the idea that our bodies have been evolved from those of pre-human ancestors. Now

[1] Tansley, *The New Psychology and its Relation to Life.*

this conception is extended to our minds. Psychology no more admits anything in the nature of gaps or sudden breaks in the evolution of mind than in the evolution of body. All the highest activities of human life, our religion, our morality, our art, and our science have, as regards their origin in time, been built up out of certain instincts which we share with the lower animals.

In psychology the term 'instinct' is used in a technical sense. It denotes 'an innate specific tendency to action common to all members of a species.' In other words, an instinct is an impulse to behave in a certain way that we find born within us, and that only waits for the right object to appear in our environment to prompt us to action. The core of instinct is emotion, what is technically called 'affect.' An instinct has indeed a certain element of cognition in it; what Aristotle would call a *κριτικὴ δύναμις*, a power of picking out a certain kind of object out of the many present in the environment. But the central element, which always remains constant, is the emotion of a particular quality which it determines its possessor to experience upon perceiving the object. And that emotion passes at once into conation, that is, a striving to act in a particular manner in regard to the object perceived. Take a simple instance. A dog is hungry. Its instinct for food enables it to distinguish a bone. When it perceives it, it feels—we have no name for the emotion—but we all know it when we are hungry and have the prospect of food. This feeling immediately prompts the dog

to action. The important point is that without that feeling there would have been no action.[1]

Psychology attempts to trace out the building up of all human conduct out of a small number of primitive instincts. Instincts are largely modified by experience. The cognitive element can be developed so as to include other objects than those which it originally selected. In man instincts can even be aroused not only by the perception of actual objects, but by ideas of objects, and even by abstract ideas. Or, again, the emotion may be modified. The instinct comes to find its expression in new bodily movements and to achieve its end by new forms of activity. A large part of human progress has consisted in the 'sublimation' of instinct—that is, the direction of instinctive impulses into new channels of action. But all through these modifications the central affective part of the instinct remains unchanged. Further, under the complicated conditions of human life we rarely find an emotional state arising out of a single instinct, as in the case of the dog and the bone. The objects and ideas that prompt us to action usually excite several instincts simultaneously. Thus the emotional state that issues in conduct is compounded of several primary instincts, mixed in varying proportions. Further, instinctive tendencies organise themselves round certain objects and ideas that play a large

[1] For one view of instinct see McDougall, *Social Psychology*, c. ii. All psychologists, however, do not accept the position that all instincts have a specific emotional core. Dr. Brown, for instance, speaks of an instinct of sleep, *Suggestion and Mental Analysis*, pp. 33–4.

part in our lives, into what are, perhaps, best called 'complexes' or what Dr. McDougall calls 'sentiments.' Strictly speaking, a 'sentiment' is the affective tone of a complex. A sentiment is a tendency to experience certain emotions whenever particular objects are present to thought. Love and hate are the typical sentiments. They arise out of not single instincts, but complexes of instincts which, as a result of past experience, have formed themselves round certain persons or objects. The bond that holds together the instinctive emotions that form a sentiment, is an emotional bond, not an intellectual. The result of such a complex is that when anything to do with the person or object arouses one of the instincts, the instinct awakened tends to awaken all the others with it. Once formed, the complex limits and controls the manner in which the instincts that compose it find expression.[1]

In short, psychology holds that instinct is the driving power of all life and conduct. No action of any kind can be performed unless it is prompted by some instinctive impulse. Man likes to consider himself a rational being, but if the above theory is true, in very few of his actions, if indeed ever, is he a purely rational being. His conduct, his preferences, his prejudices, even his thinking, are governed far more than he is aware by largely unconscious impulses that he shares with his dog and his cat. Reason can indeed, and should, direct instinct. It judges between conflicting instincts.

[1] On complexes, *see* Tansley, c. v.; McDougall, cc. v.–vi.; Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity*, c. v.

It considers methods of action by which instinctive desires may find satisfaction. But reason by itself can initiate nothing. It is limited, so to say, by the instincts that are available. As Aristotle said long ago, *διάνοια αὐτὴ οὐθὲν κινεῖ ἀλλ' ἡ ἑνεκά του καὶ πρακτική*. Psychology teaches that the driving force of all intelligent action is instinct.

Further, we must accustom ourselves to the idea that the thoughts and feelings of which we are conscious form only a small part of the mind. Our conduct is largely conditioned by instinctive impulses of which we are only partially conscious, if at all. In fact, we are rarely aware of all the motives that prompt any given action. The existence of the unconscious mind accounts for much that is perplexing. Conflicts inevitably arise within the mind. Two rival complexes built up either out of the same or different instincts cannot both be satisfied. The mind is divided against itself. The ideal solution is to face out the position with the aid of reason and, deliberately adopting a policy that will satisfy one complex, at the same time to divert the energy of the rival complex into some new channel that is no longer inconsistent with the policy adopted. Conflict may thus be a great factor in mental development, the emotion of one aim being transformed to a similar but higher aim. If unity is attained by the sublimation of instinct, mental health is forwarded. But often the mind, for various causes, brings the pain of conflict to an end by shirking rather than solving it. One method by which the strain of battle is eased is ' repression.'

In this case the desire or impulse which is repugnant to the dominant character of the individual is either consciously or unconsciously pushed down below the level of consciousness. There is a natural tendency of the mind to forget or ignore whatever is unpleasant. The means of repression seems to be the refusal to attend to any of the elements of the hostile complex, and so to cut it off from the conscious activity of the mind. When the complex is of weak affect, no harm is done. But when it is of strong affect, having behind it the full energy of one or more primary instincts, the result is disastrous. Its possessor is unaware of its existence, but it is by no means idle. It seeks expression indirectly, often in perverted or morbid ways. It realises itself in some manifestation so disguised that it is no longer apparent to the individual. So the true balance and unity of the mind is upset, and the cause of the trouble lies down in the unconscious. We get a new concept, that of 'moral disease,' a disordered state of mind, due to causes of which the patient is unconscious, but showing itself in a vague sense of discomfort, in morbid and perverted desires, in general loss of power and the like. The aim of mental analysis is to discover the repressed complex and by bringing it up into the conscious life to restore harmony If its possessor can be got to own it and face it out, and employment can be found for its energies, health of mind is restored.

In all this there is nothing that necessarily conflicts with the Christian idea of sin. Christians

have always insisted that sin was not merely intellectual error or ignorance. Man's sinful condition is largely emotional. He desires the wrong objects. He responds to the wrong stimuli. He loves what is evil and selfish. If life is built up out of elements of instinct, this stress on the emotional and affective side of man's nature is quite sound. The power of sin lies in the misdirection of instincts that have their place in human nature, so as to disorder the personal life of the sinner and to do harm to the community. We may illustrate our position by examining what we mean by 'common sense.' At first this appears to be a capacity for right thinking. When, however, we begin to consider the difference between sitting down and thinking out in the abstract how to deal with a given situation and our actual flurried and confused behaviour when we do actually face it, we see that the common sense which deals adequately with an emergency is largely an emotional capacity. Our ability to cope with problems depends quite as much on right impulse and right feeling as right thinking. So sin is largely the emotional inability to make the right response to a situation. Our outward conduct is wrong because our inner mechanism of action is disordered.

On the other hand, not only Christians but all teachers of morality must insist on the supreme importance of the conscious life. In a reaction against an unduly intellectual view of life, we must not disparage reason. 'Our Christianity is not in the least afraid to acknowledge how deep our roots

go down into the hidden soil of the underworld. But none of this avails to conceal the compensating truth, which is, that, small as is the space which consciousness illumines, nevertheless in that illuminated spot lies the key to our whole position. There, in it, is laid out the arena on which the spiritual battle is lost or won. . . . It is on the supreme importance of consciousness that the faith of Jesus Christ lays all its emphasis.'[1] As we saw, actual sin—that is, disobedience to God's will, or the state that results from such disobedience—cannot occur until we have become aware of the law of God as binding on us. Nor can original sin, or the awareness of our moral disability and lack of harmony with God, exist until we are capable of having ideals and understanding to some degree the meaning of morality. The new psychology only conflicts with the doctrine of sin when it lays such exclusive stress on the unconscious or emotional side of man's nature as practically to deny him any power of reason or conscious choice at all.

Further, psychology throws much light upon the origin of sin. It shows us whence we get those impulses and desires which constitute the raw material of sin. They are a part of our nature as we inherit it from our animal ancestry. Again, we must insist that the mere possession of strong passions of any kind, even though they need careful control and readily prompt us to sinful conduct, cannot be in itself sinful. Every instinct has its place and serves a purpose. The same impulses

[1] Scott Holland, *The Philosophy of Faith*, pp. 97–8.

from which spring all kinds of vice and selfishness are also the condition of all virtue and heroism. If we did not possess them, we could not become sinners, but we could not become saints either.

Again, in the psychological concept of 'moral disease' we get an idea that comes very close indeed to that of 'original sin.' It is a state of moral weakness and distraction for which the individual is not personally responsible. His life is disordered. He cannot attain to the unification of mind which alone brings peace and satisfaction. The causes lie in himself, but he cannot discover them. Once more we must be careful. It is true that modern knowledge may show that people have often been blamed for conduct for which they were not really blameworthy, since it was due to moral disease. It may well be that much that has been regarded as actual sin should be more truly put down to original sin. Still, unless we are prepared to deny any possibility of conscious choice and rational conduct and to declare that all sense of responsibility for our actions is an illusion, we cannot go on to argue that all sin is due to repressions. Actual sin and moral disease have been confused in the past and the line between them in any particular case is hard to draw, but we must not rush to the other extreme and say that all sin is moral disease. That would only be to substitute a new confusion for the old. Only so far as our repressions are due to the wilful refusal to face the facts of life or to shirking the pain of conflict, or again to deliberate unwillingness to find healthy employment for some impulse at the cost

of thought and trouble, can the disorder that results be counted as actual sin. Otherwise the true responsibility lies with our bad social environment, wrong education, evil traditions and the like. Some psychologists would trace repressed complexes back to the earliest infancy. Others suggest that this is precarious. The adult who is being analysed would readily grasp at the happy suggestion that his state is due to infantile conditions for which he cannot be blamed. An infant self is a most desirable whipping-boy.[1]

In any case the recognition that much apparent sin is really due to moral disease and that people are often better than they seem, introduces no new theological difficulties. We have long acknowledged that physical conditions modify the guilt of apparently sinful acts. An operation for adenoids will change the character of an ill-disposed child. A blow on the head will reduce to moral decadence a man who has hitherto been sober and honest. Now we are asked to enlarge this acknowledgment to include damage done to the mental as well as the physical organism by which a man lives out his life here. No doubt this adds to the practical difficulty of administering reproof and punishment.

[1] On the strict Freudian view repression begins in earliest infancy, and all repressed complexes are regarded as sexual, using the term in the widest sense. On the other hand, during the war shell-shock cases afforded instances of repressions that could not possibly be classed as sexual, *cp.* Brown, *Psychology and Psychotherapy*. The school of Dr. Jung rather regards repressions as due to weakness of the *libido* or impulse, so that the man cannot face the strains of life. This leads to 'regression.' Others regard buried complexes as due rather to repressed ego-instinct. Probably all these views need to be combined.

But, as we have said before, guilt can only be estimated by God. The Christian doctrine of sin in all its essentials remains unaffected. Even if we prefer to designate ' original sin ' by the new name of ' moral disease,' the word ' sin ' cannot be erased from our vocabulary, though we may be less confident in estimating the guilt of particular cases.

So far then the Christian doctrine can be fairly expressed in terms of the new psychology. But here we come face to face with certain vital issues. The Christian doctrine assumes that man possesses a real power of choice, that the moral law as apprehended by conscience is objectively valid, and that God is a moral personality with a will and mind of His own over against man. On the other hand, many psychologists suggest, if they do not actually assert, that a scientific account of man's behaviour leaves no room for free will in any sense, that conscience is only an emotion, and therefore moral distinctions exist only in the mind of the individual or the community and that God is only a ' projection ' of the human mind. If any of these assumptions be granted, clearly the Christian doctrine of sin is no longer tenable.

Before we discuss these objections we may begin by considering the nature of psychology. How far is it competent to pronounce a verdict on ultimate realities? Psychology employs the methods of physical science, and especially of biology. It collects and observes mental facts of all kinds. It may be defined as ' the science of behaviour ' It traces out the rise and history of mental

phenomena, the processes by which we come to act and think. The only kind of explanation of conduct that it can offer is a description of what is found regularly to occur in studying it. It can explain the processes by which I come to desire or think or know. It rightly seeks to discover and formulate the laws of mental activity. But there its authority ends. It is unable to deal with ultimate questions, as for instance those of validity. It describes the mental processes by which I do a sum in arithmetic, but it cannot prove that my conclusions are true for all minds. Further, we may even doubt whether the phenomena which it studies, namely the mental processes by which we apprehend the external world, are not so essentially different from those which physical science studies, namely the external world itself, as to demand different categories and methods. It may be that psychology will in the long run be found to have been hampered and distorted by the categories which it has borrowed from biology, just as biology itself was formerly hindered by using those which it had borrowed from physics and chemistry. Or, as Dr. Pratt has recently put it, ' Psychology seems to be a mixture of two sciences. . . . It is in part a description of certain physical processes which are directly connected with certain physiological processes, and which therefore obey the laws of the bodily mechanism ; and it is also a description of the way in which persons usually think and act. . . . If this view be true, then the ' explanations ' of psychology will be only the most general sort of

description, since the activities of personality can be psychologised only in a most superficial way. This, however, by no means does away with psychology. Inasmuch as even free personalities are more or less alike, and since all human persons are compelled to make use of the same physiological machine, their customary activities and experiences will be capable of description in generalised language. And this generalised description—which is psychology—would still hold even if themselves were surrounded by a non-human spiritual world with which they had actual commerce.' [1]

These considerations may go far to account for the determinism to which a merely biological view of our mental life readily leads. If all volition is in every case due to the complexes that a man has formed, combined with the stimulus given by the environment, and if the formation of these complexes is due to past instinctive responses to environment, then all possibility of choice or freedom seems ruled out.[2] It is strange that the same psychology which starts with a protest against a mechanical view of the world, asserting that even the humblest organism affords evidence of purpose in its life and conduct, should end in a determinism as rigid as any maintained by the most mechanical of philosophies. It may be suggested that the difficulty is caused by the dual nature of psychology. If science cannot find free-will in human conduct it is because it has

[1] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 456–7.

[2] This is a real perplexity to Dr. McDougall, who faces out the consequences with a candour that contrasts favourably with the evasions of other writers. *Social Psychology*, pp. 231–5.

already abstracted it. Science is and must be determinist. And so far as psychology adopts the methods of physical science, it must be determined too. But in so far as it attempts to explain actual life—life as it is being lived—it must recognise that it is prevented by its abstract method from giving an exhaustive account. Psychology can take an action that is past and trace out the instincts that prompted it, but it cannot say that at the moment when it was performed that and that action only was possible. By the time that an action has come under the analysis of the psychologist, the life has gone out of it. He can only hold a post-mortem, and he must not mistake it for an operation on the living subject. Further, in many discussions of this question there appears to be a serious confusion between the two senses of 'will.' The word 'will' may mean either a strong and dominant purpose, or it may mean the power of choosing at a given moment between two alternative and inconsistent courses of action. When it is used in the former sense, the existence of a strong will is admirably explained by psychology as depending on the existence of a strong self-regarding sentiment. When it is used in the latter sense, we are up against the mystery of life itself. Self-determination appears to be one of the ultimate elements of life as it is lived. Psychology legitimately attempts to break up the self into a collection of states of mind, but the self, though indeed it does not exist apart from its states, is not merely the sum total of its states. In the analysis something escapes which is not restored when the states

are combined together again. And this something is not an element of the same character as the states of mind that it holds together in life. Rather we hold that behind all ideas and states of consciousness lies the self through which alone they live. It is the self that acts and chooses. Moral action is the real choice of a real living self. And the problem of the self which lies behind all the manifestations of its activity falls outside the province of psychology. In short, psychology can neither prove nor disprove free-will. It can describe the mental machinery by which I choose, but the problem still remains what is meant by 'I,' and whether my apparent freedom to choose is only an illusion.

We may now turn to the question of the moral law. Here again we are prepared to accept the account that psychology gives of the historical origin of morality. Moral conduct springs out of the regulation of the impulses of the individual by the custom of the group or herd. By social customs or herd law the herd is kept together and rendered effective. The instinct that prompts obedience is the 'herd instinct'—that is, an instinct based on 'the specific sensitiveness of the individual mind of the gregarious animal to suggestions arising from the herd.'[1] In virtue of this the individual becomes aware of the herd and its call, desires to be at one

[1] Tansley, p. 194, quoted from Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. Many psychologists, including Dr. McDougall, deny the existence of any specific 'herd instinct.' For our present purpose this is unimportant, as a similar result is attained by combining other elements of instinct.

with it, and only finds satisfaction when that oneness is attained. Hence the 'moral sense' is in origin sensitiveness to the call of the herd. A bad conscience is the feeling of discomfort that arises from thwarted herd instinct. An illustration of this may be taken from the animal world, if we compare the behaviour of a dog with that of a cat. A dog has a conscience and a cat none. When a cat is caught, say, stealing milk, it simply runs away. It never was a herd animal. When a dog has done what it knows from past experience will be punished, it comes to its master reluctantly to receive its punishment. Its master represents the leader of the pack.

Man, however, has learnt in some measure to transcend herd morality. He has come to develop an 'ethical self.' He has asserted his right to individual judgment. As a member of the herd he built up a strong self-regarding sentiment. He formed in his own mind a picture of himself as a loyal member of the herd, a picture of himself as admired by his fellow-members. In this way the impulse to fulfil herd law came to be reinforced by a new instinct, the ego instinct, the instinct of self-assertion. At first these two instincts—the herd instinct prompting him to obey herd law, and the ego-instinct prompting him to be a loyal herd-member—coincided in their aim. But under certain conditions they began to come into conflict. The self-regarding complex managed to escape from bondage to the herd law. The individual used his reason to compare his herd code with that of other herds, to criticise it and to form a new ideal for

himself, starting indeed from the old morality, but in certain ways modifying it and rising above it. This new idea has behind it no longer herd instinct in alliance with ego instinct, but only a strongly developed ego complex. On this level a bad conscience is still the discomfort that rises from thwarted instinct, now, however, no longer the thwarted herd instinct, but the thwarted self-regarding instinct. We have reached a higher morality rising out of and always largely dependent on the original herd morality. Good is now what the 'ethical' self approves.[1]

If, then, the moral law is conduct approved either by the herd or by the ethical self, and its force is derived from instinct, how does God come to be regarded as its source? The answer suggested is that God is a 'projection.' Projection, like repression, is one of the methods by which the mind tries to attain to harmony when a conflict arises between two complexes built up either out of the same or different instincts. In order to get peace, the mind refuses to acknowledge one complex as part of its own content and projects it upon some imaginary external substitute. In primitive times the individual feels the pressure of his tribe. Soon desire, prompted by egoistic instincts, clashes with tribal law. A conflict arises between two instincts within himself. In order to ease this, he projects one set of impulses upon a tribal god, a supreme herd leader, and regards all impulses in himself

[1] Tansley, especially cc. xvi., xviii., and xix. *Cf.* McDougall, c. viii. and supplementary c. i.

that conflict with the herd code as sinful. At a later stage of development, all promptings that are recognised as beneficial are assigned to a good god, other promptings recognised as harmful are assigned to an evil spirit. So the internal battle is represented as due to rival powers outside, and by evading personal responsibility the mind is restored to some sort of harmony. Again, when the individual passes from the stage of mere herd morality to that of personal morality, the same process occurs. He projects his ethical self—that is, his highest standard of conduct—upon a god, with whom he claims to enter into communion. In this way moral progress is strengthened. The ideal which the mind has created is regarded as a goal to which an extended conation can be directed. 'The ideal may be projected upon a god, represented as the will of God, and when it is thus definitely externalised, an added feeling of security is often felt—the treasure is safe in a supernatural sanctuary.'[1]

This suggests that the sense of sin simply rises from an unsatisfied instinct of some kind. Sin is not really disobedience to a living God ; it is rather the failure to attain unification of mind. The complex which remains unsatisfied takes its revenge by causing the mind to picture the action that satisfies the victorious complex as an act of hostility not to itself, but to an external entity, namely God.

We may take first the question of the moral law, accepting the description given by psychology of the origin of conscience as probably correct.

[1] Tansley, p. 139.

Morality has a history in time. Conscience itself may rightly be considered, not as a distinct faculty, but as emerging out of an elaboration and sublimation of instincts shared by the lower animals. But this does not touch the vital issue which is one, not of the origin, but the validity of moral judgments. As a matter of actual fact, conscience has emerged : we do make judgments of value. We say this is good and that is bad ; this is right and that is wrong ; and these judgments claim to be valid for all minds. They may be mistaken, just as intellectual judgments may be mistaken in particular cases, but this does not affect their claim to express propositions which, if true, are true for all minds. Mere emotion cannot possibly claim this objectivity. I may like pickles, or I may not. It is a question of taste, and everyone recognises it to be such. If our moral judgments were equally the mere expression of our personal like or dislike, they would be equally subjective, and the words ' right ' or ' wrong ' would cease to have any practical meaning. That is just what our moral consciousness denies. When it makes such judgments it affirms that conduct is right or wrong in itself quite independently of what I or other individuals, or even the community, may think or feel. In other words, it implies the existence of a moral law that we find and do not make. Psychology can describe the mental development by which we have become aware of the existence of the moral law, but it can give no real account of the sense of obligation that attaches to it.

The question of intellectual judgments is strictly

parallel. Mr. Tansley admits that science itself and the whole desire for and conception of intellectual truth has been evolved out of primitive instincts. There is a tendency in the mind to strive after intellectual unity as well as after unity of purpose. But he does not therefore doubt that scientific truth is true for all minds. He would regard it as unreasonable to dispute his conclusions on the ground that he once babbled as an infant or that his mental processes spring from the instinct of curiosity which he shares with his horse. He would postulate the validity of the laws of thought which are implied in all statements of truth. So we maintain that, as man has become capable of striving after and apprehending intellectual, so he has equally become capable of apprehending moral truth.[1]

To look at it from another point of view, Mr. Tansley argues as if morality was no more than an elaboration of herd instinct, or at a later stage of

[1] On this question see especially Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, pp. 68–79 and 93–107. Harley Walker, *The Construction of the World in Terms of Fact and Value* (Blackwell). On 'conscience,' see on the one side McDougall, *Social Psychology*, pp. 8 and 229. In *Body and Mind* he writes, 'Objects have value for us in proportion as they excite our conative tendencies; our consciousness of their value positive or negative is our consciousness of the strength of the conation they awake in us.' This appears to reduce conscience to an emotion. This standpoint is criticised by Dr. Rashdall in *Is Conscience an Emotion?* For a simpler statement see his article in the *Hibbert Journal* of July 1921. A valuable statement from a psychological point of view is given in Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*. 'Conscience stands outside the instinctive life of man, not as something separate, but as an awareness of the success or failure of that life in maintaining its status and its growth' (p. 99). The truth seems to be that conscience is an activity of the whole man, involving reason, emotion, and will.

ego instinct. That we entirely deny. The appearance of a new name suggests that a new fact is recognised. The very use of the same term for conduct based on two distinct instincts, at least suggests the presence of some common element that is not to be identified with either of them. The admission that morality does not disappear when the pressure of the herd code is weakened, but assumes a new and higher form, implies that morality and herd law are not entirely identical. There may well have been a time when their content was identical, when the content of the moral law was coextensive with tribal custom, but the fact that they did become, in course of time, differentiated implies that from the first there was a latent difference between them, though primitive man was long unconscious of it. Nor can we argue that the fact that full consciousness of the moral law was late in time in emerging is any proof of inferiority, or the fact that it emerged gradually in any way weakens the truth that something essentially new has appeared which cannot be explained in terms of the old.

We must always judge things not by what they once were, but by what they have become. The higher explains the lower, not the lower the higher. We cannot, indeed, demonstrate by some infallible proof that our moral values are more than individual or group tastes, or that our science is not a mere dream. Our belief in both must, in the last resort, depend on an act of faith in the reasonableness of the universe; we are compelled to stake our lives

on the venture that our experience is not a ghastly and meaningless illusion. Men of religion and men of science alike make the plunge when they assert the validity of moral and intellectual truth. All such assertion lies outside the province of psychology.

Similarly we allow that our minds use projection, and that projection may well be one of the forms of mental activity by which we come to form an idea of God. But this is very different from saying that God is only a projection. We might argue on similar lines that all our friends are ' projections.' As a result of the many conflicting complexes within myself, I project them upon a succession of external entities, and behold I create all my friends and acquaintances with their various characters ! That is equally sound psychology and equally ridiculous argument.

It is more reasonable to suppose that we come to know God in much the same way as we come to know our fellow-men. I do not first become conscious of myself and then proceed to deduce the existence of other similar selves. My earliest experience includes both the knowledge of myself and of other selves. I come to know myself in relation to others. It is at least a tenable position that from the first the experience of the race contained a certain dim and undeveloped knowledge of God. Gradually what had always been implicit was made explicit. What was given by experience was analysed and differentiated. Men came to believe in a power behind the world, however

vaguely conceived; and projection may very well have been the psychological method through which men came to interpret and express their belief. Even to-day, we can only think of God in terms of the highest that we know. There is a necessary anthropomorphism in all religion. For a long time man hardly conceived of the power behind the world as personal, because he had very little idea of his own personality. He believed in a power close to him and his tribe as they wrestled with their environment to wrest from it the highest kind of life that they knew. He thought of his God in relation to whatever he regarded as most important. When food is most important, God is mainly concerned with the getting of food. So, too, when man has advanced to the stage of recognising higher social values, these are equally rooted in God. Just as truth is recognised as being independent of this or that man's or even the tribe's apprehension, so God's will, as expressed in the moral law, is regarded as being independent of the worshipper's own will, or of the group will. We can never escape from 'projection,' in so far as we find in our highest ideals the clue to the knowledge of God. But this in no way proves that God is created by human imagination.

Mr. Tansley writes, 'It cannot be doubted that God has been a necessity to the human race, that He is still a necessity and will long continue to be so. If all religious tradition had been destroyed at any moment, and a new generation brought up in ignorance that it ever existed, it can scarcely be doubted

that a new religion of substantially the same type, though varying in form according to the epoch, would have appeared. If this be so, we cannot deny the truth of the substance of religion, though we criticise many of its forms. All universal and self-consistent expressions of the activity of the human spirit have a claim to the name of truth. It is clear that religious truth is incommensurate with scientific truth, just as mathematical truth is incommensurate with artistic truth.'[1] Here is pragmatism with a vengeance! Mr. Tansley's view would clearly reduce religion to the sphere of art and imagination. Religion becomes a human achievement. All that would be possible would be a vague mysticism free from moral intolerance.

In other words it substitutes the idea of God for God. This is in effect not to explain but to abolish religion. Religion means to be objective. It is an attitude towards a power that it postulates as real. The irony of Mr. Tansley's position is that it makes the psychology of religion be born only to commit suicide. It destroys the reality of religion by the very act of describing it. The reward of its study is to prove that there is nothing to study. By the same method, as we saw, conscience is reduced to being a mere emotion, and the sense of value only the mark of a specially strong conation. Morality, like religion, is in effect abolished. For the moral ideal claims to be more than a matter of personal taste. If it is not grounded in reality, its obligation ceases. Once again psychology makes

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 133–9.

impossible the very experience that it sets out to study. And, as we suggested before, why should it stop here? Why should it not equally deny the validity of all scientific truth, since it can describe the psychical processes by which the mind comes to hold it? [1]

Yet psychology bears within itself evidence of its inability to explain all things. We read much about the conduct of organisms as involving purpose, even though in the case of the lower organisms there is no knowledge of the purpose, and even in man that knowledge is far from complete. Does not the very idea of purpose running through the course of evolution imply some consciousness to which that purpose is present? Can we speak in any intelligible sense of an unconscious purpose, or an unconscious purpose developing upwards into consciousness? Further, this upward development of life, this building up of an elaborate mental structure out of a few simple elements of instinct is conditioned throughout by environment. It is the environment that moulds the development of mind. What, then, is the relation between the environment and the life-process? Are they in harmony or in opposition? Must there not be some ultimate and inclusive reality beyond both? In other words, psychology itself can hardly dispense with the idea of the immanent purpose of a God who transcends the world-process.

Lastly, psychology as a whole knows nothing of any specific religious instinct. Religious emotions

[1] *Cp.* Pratt, pp. 40–41 and 335–6.

and impulses have been evolved out of instincts that are in no way specifically religious. This in no way affects Christian belief. We do not hold that we possess one set of faculties for doing big things and another for doing little things. As the last quotation from Mr. Tansley shows, even though we possess no specific instinct for religion, it still remains true that in face of the world, man's instincts universally tend to organise themselves into religion.[1] In that sense, man is naturally religious. The important question is not the mental elements into which our religious life can be decomposed, nor again, the part played by group influence in developing religious awe and belief, but the reality of the God with whom we hold converse. Once again, we allow that we walk by faith, not sight. We only protest that psychology has no authority to dispute the verdict of faith.

To sum up, the Christian believes that the development which psychology records is the working out in time of the purpose of a God of love. In man we see the attainment of a new level of life. He is able not only to live in accordance with the divine purpose, but to understand and consciously to co-operate with it. Through a long process by which instincts have been elaborated he has become able to recognise the obligations of truth and the

[1] Religion seems to have developed like tool-making, quite independently in many places. The real question is whether it is an illusion beneficial to the race in its early stages, but one which it will in due time outgrow, or whether there is behind religion a God who can be truly conceived as a loving Father. *Cp.* Coe, *Psychology of Religion*, cc. vi. and xiv.–xv.

moral law. That is, from the standpoint of religion, through this new-born and slowly developing consciousness of truth and right, God has been revealing Himself. 'Conscience cannot be the product of the existing moral code of society, for then we could not explain either the genesis of that public opinion or the persistent revolt against its limitations which we find in the greater minds. The only hypothesis which explains the facts is that in conscience we feel the motions of the universal Reason which strives to convert the human organism into an organ of itself.'[1] Only on this level, when man has become conscious of the world-purpose and is able to co-operate with it by voluntary choice, can the possibility of sin arise. All wilful failure to understand or forward the vital process, all wilful refusal to obey the progressive requirements of the moral law or to be loyal to the quest for truth, are for the Christian disloyalty to the living God, unfilial conduct against the holy and loving Father. The Christian finds in man's dissatisfaction and search for inward harmony and peace God's own method of drawing him into fellowship with Himself. Man's nature can only be truly harmonised, he can only find true happiness by doing the will of God. Though sin is not 'merely unsublimated instinct,' unsatisfied instinct is the God-given material out of which the sense of sin has been developed on the plane of moral life. Further, since man is through and through a social being, we find not only individuals but communities

[1] Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 33.

setting themselves in opposition to the world purpose. Hence we get corporate sin, and through such corporate sin the character of the individual members of such communities becomes marked from the earliest moments of their life. Psychology has much to say of 'moral disease.' Christians have long been accustomed to speak of 'original sin,' a phrase that brings out the truth that such moral disease, so far as is caused by the perverted will and mind of the community, conflicts with the purpose of God and disables the individual through no fault of his own from pure fellowship with God. Thus we hold that psychology can teach us nothing new about the essential nature of sin or original sin. It has thrown much light on the psychical machinery of sin. It is proving of enormous assistance in distinguishing between the commission of actual sin and moral disease. For practical dealing with sin the increased knowledge of the structure of the mind cannot fail to be of the highest importance. Spiritual direction will be in the future largely on psychological lines. Many of our old methods have been shown to be faulty. But from the standpoint of pure theology the idea of sin still remains unaffected. Our acceptance or rejection of the Christian view of sin must be determined on other grounds than those of psychology.

LECTURE V

PHILOSOPHY AND SIN

The Christian idea of sin is in the closest connexion with the Christian belief as to the relations between God and the world. It postulates a definite attitude towards reality. There are certain types of philosophy that are inconsistent with the Christian attitude either towards God or towards sin. If they are accepted as true, their acceptance must in the end cause the Christian idea of sin to be modified or discarded. Sin has to be regarded not as sin, but as something else. In this lecture some attempt will be made to draw out the presuppositions of the Christian idea of sin, and to show how the acceptance in many quarters of doctrines that conflict with these has undermined the sense of the reality and seriousness of sin.

If we take the teaching of Jesus Christ in broad outline we find that the religion that He taught was not indeed a metaphysic, but yet has certain metaphysical implications by which it stands or falls. In His discourses and His parables He assumes certain truths about the ultimate relation of God to the world and to mankind.

First of all, then, He assumes the traditional Jewish doctrine of the all-sovereignty of God.

All life and all power depend upon His will. The words so often upon His lips, 'Do not be anxious,' spring from an optimism based upon the wisdom and power of God. God cares for the birds and the flowers.[1] He created all that exists.[2] With God all things are possible.[3] He alone can destroy soul and body in Gehenna.[4] His power is not exhausted, as the scepticism of the Sadducees implied, in the present order of being.[5] So in the parables, God is the Supreme King. His word is law. Even the great men of His court are slaves. Against Him they have no legal claims. God is the Householder. He sets the slaves their tasks. They can never render Him more than their due service. The money that they trade with is His money. The vineyard with which they are entrusted is His. He has ordered all the circumstances of their employ. They are at best stewards, and at the end an account has always to be rendered.[6] There is no need to elaborate the theme. Such teaching in picture form describes the all-sovereignty of the God and Father of Jesus Christ. It leaves room for no alien or hostile powers independent of that sovereignty. The devil is no rival god. His dominion is usurped. He has no claim to worship.[7] In God's own time He will go into the fire that has already been prepared for him.[8] Even now one stronger than

[1] Matthew vi. 26–8. [2] Matthew xi. 25.
[3] Mark x. 27. [4] Matthew x. 28. [5] Mark xii. 24.
[6] *E.g.* Matthew xxii. 2 ff., xviii. 23 ff.; Luke xvii. 10; Mark xii. 1 ff., etc.
[7] Matthew iv. 10. [8] Matthew xxv. 41.

he has appeared and his tyranny is being overthrown.[1]

Secondly, our Lord assumes in human life a measure of true independence. God not only loans out His power to man in varying measure as He wills, but goes 'into a far country.' He, as it were, withdraws Himself a space to give men room to lead their own lives and develop the capacities that He has lent.[2] That is to say, in the Christian religion, side by side with the possibility of abiding intercourse with God to be realised in prayer, and side by side with the conviction of the utter dependence of all created life on His will, there is the recognition of a distinctness, of a withdrawal of God which is necessary to make possible a true probation.

Thirdly, our Lord from first to last assumes that men have a true power of choice. They can either respond or not respond to His appeal.[3] The slave who does not watch or who fails to use the money entrusted to him is blamed as being responsible for his act.[4] There can be no reconciliation between the Gospel and determinism. When the time of judgment comes, men are judged for the use that they have made of their opportunities. Our Lord's teaching fully recognises the great differences of opportunity. His verdict on human life depends not on actual achievement but on possible achievement. But always He

[1] Mark iii. 27.
[2] Matthew xxv. 14; Luke xix. 12; *cf.* Mark xii. 1.
[3] *E.g.* Luke xiv. 16–24; Matthew xi. 28–30, etc.
[4] *E.g.* Matthew xxv. 26–7, 45; Mark xiii. 33–37.

insists on the reality and seriousness of acts of choice made here and now.

It is clear, then, that our Lord's teaching implies a definite attitude both of mind and will towards ultimate reality. No view of the world that contradicts it can claim to be Christian. On the other hand, Christian theology represents an attempt to be loyal to the moral and spiritual outlook of Christ.

First, there is the Christian doctrine of creation. 'I believe in one God the Father all-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.' The doctrine of creation out of nothing is largely a negative doctrine, the ruling out of certain other doctrines of God's relation to the world. It sets aside all dualism. God is not limited by having to operate upon some intractable substance or matter of any kind which exists independently of Himself and is reluctant to be subjected to His will. Nor, again, is God limited by being obliged to conform to certain necessary laws independent of His own will. The idea of 'creation' is frankly a metaphor. It is simply the attempt to express the belief that God is not working under alien conditions or on foreign material. Rather all that exists, seen or unseen, came into being by His will and continues to exist by the active exercise of the same will. In virtue of its creation the world has an existence of its own distinct from, but not independent of that of God. All power in the world is God's power, though He may will to lend it to created beings.

No doubt such a view of the world has its difficulties, but I do not know that they are greater than those that are involved in other attempts to account for existence. The universe is not an easy thing to explain. For our present purpose it is sufficient to point out that this doctrine of creation at once sets aside certain explanations of sin. Sin is not due to the intractability of matter or to the necessary conditions of existence. We do not sin merely because we live in material bodies, nor do we sin because God was obliged to make us sinful. All that God has created is in itself good: it only becomes evil when it is misused or prevented by the free-will of created beings.

To bring out more fully the importance of this view, we may stop to consider the assertion made, for instance, by St. Augustine, that evil is negative, that it is a *privatio*, an absence of due good, as darkness is the absence of light. This theory witnesses to the truth that in God's universe there is no nature or substance intrinsically evil. But it breaks down badly when we come to an evil will. Indeed, in St. Augustine himself it would appear that 'evil is a negation, but in the same sense in which fire is a negation, because it tends to destroy the material on which it feeds.'[1] In other words, so long as we consider material things or the various powers of action possessed by living creatures, we see at once that they can only be

[1] Müller, *The Christian Doctrine of Sin* (E.T.), vol. i. p. 292. For St. Augustine's teaching see also Lacey, *Nature, Miracle, and Sin*, Lectures v.–vi.

called evil, not in virtue of any quality inherent in themselves, but in so far as they are being used for some wrong purposes. The evil lies in the misuse or perversion of what is good if used rightly. Or again, evil is often good out of place. Dirt is good in a flower-bed but bad in a tea-cup. A bull is magnificent in a field but undesirable in a china-shop. In such cases it may be argued that evil is essentially negative. It denotes good misdirected so as to impede or prevent right action. Even so, however, it is always relative to some purpose. And when we pass on to human beings, evil clearly becomes more than a negative idea. An evil will is a very positive and destructive force. A man full of spite and malice cannot in any intelligible sense be described as simply lacking in due good. In other words, when we reach the plane of moral action, on which alone sin becomes possible, the idea of evil as privation proves inadequate. The sinner is not simply the man who is lacking in good He is the man who loves and chooses and works evil, who so misuses his powers as not only to fall short of the purpose for which he was created, but as to oppose the will of God. Even so, moral evil is always a disruptive force. It can destroy, but not construct, except in so far as it makes use of means and forces that in themselves are good. A gang of thieves can only be effective by practising honesty among themselves. Even the Satan of 'Paradise Lost' is admirable only in virtue of his good qualities, though he exhibits them in a bad cause. The very instincts

that prompt the cruelty of war are in themselves good and capable of being directed to good ends. The pugnacity that destroys can be harnessed in the service of adventure for humanity. Sin has been rightly called 'the one irrational thing in the universe.'[1] It is irrational in the sense that it makes for chaos, it disorders and thwarts the world-purpose, it borrows its strength only from the good that it perverts. If left to itself it must ultimately issue in the negation of all life worth the name. But though it is irrational it has vast powers of destruction. We cannot afford to treat it as a mere negation, a mere absence of good. We may believe that in the long run a wholly evil will must stultify itself, but in the meantime its capacities for damage are enormous.

Granted, then, that on the Christian view there is nothing essentially evil except an evil will, we are at once faced with the obvious objection that the mere existence of evil, however caused, is sufficient to disprove the all sovereignty of a good God. Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? Then He is impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then He is malevolent. The traditional Christian answer has been often enough stated during the last few years. We need only summarise the chief lines of argument. Perhaps it can be most conveniently put thus.

If we believe that God is perfect love and wisdom and power, we must believe that He purposed to bring into being a world which does not

[1] Aubrey Moore, *Essays Scientific and Philosophical*, p. 165.

fall short of, however much it may surpass, the best that we can conceive, and that is a world of beings able to share and return His love and to work with Him in carrying out His purpose. And the creation of such a universe involved the possibility of sin. We may consider the marvellous beauty of the world. In beauty we have a value that can from its essential nature be called into existence, as it were, in a moment by God. Assuredly this world is crammed with beauty; it is lavished even where human eye rarely gazes. No doubt there are details in nature that may be called ugly, but as a whole it is beautiful; and when we look below the surface in detail there is the strangely delicate texture of leaf and flesh. We may claim that the present beauty of the world is a pledge of the final purpose of the Creator. When we consider the other qualities that mark the highest life—righteousness, truth, and the like—we see that these cannot be created ready-made by the decree of God.[1] God is 'almighty,' not in the sense that He can do all things, but that He can do all possible things. He cannot escape the law of contradiction. Creation of any kind involves determination; in actualising certain possibilities, certain other possibilities are ruled out. If, then, God willed to bring into existence men and women capable of love and righteousness, able to live as sons and daughters in their Father's home, love and righteousness involve the gift of freedom. Compulsory love, machine-made righteousness, are self-con-

[1] *Cp.* D'Arcy in *God and the Struggle for Existence*, pp. 23–5.

tradictory terms. A man can in truth no more love God of necessity than he can love a woman for her money. Or again if we are to render to God the glad service of children, that calls for sympathy and co-operation. Forced human labour, as we know it, becomes dehumanised. The slave is no longer a man but an animated tool. In short, even God could not create sons and daughters by word of command. The capacity for the home life of heaven must be acquired by acts of free choice. If men and women were to be more than conscious machines, they must be free to withhold the love and obedience which they owe. We must not exaggerate man's freedom. He can only exercise it within certain limits. A consistent and ordered life is only possible under the conditions of an external world governed by fixed laws. All that is necessary is a true power of choice—the possibility of self-determination in response to a given environment. In the parable of the Talents, the conditions under which they are lent are fixed. The sum distributed varies. For these the servants are not responsible. But they are responsible for the use that they severally make of their various talents under the conditions laid down.[1]

In short, we maintain that the creation of the world was a great adventure of love, springing from the desire of our heavenly Father that a family of sons and daughters might share the fullness of His bliss and activity. That involved the risk of

[1] On free-will, see Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, pp. 398–9 and c. xvii.

sin and the disorder consequent on sin. Hence at this moment it is not the best of all possible worlds. Rather we are witnessing the working out of that process by which alone the best of all worlds could be produced. Sin and the suffering caused by sin are the price that has had to be risked: they are worth while, because of the magnificence of the end in view. God cannot interfere to compel righteousness or annihilate sin, because that would destroy that free co-operation with Him which is the very condition of the working out of the world purpose. God has indeed intervened, but in a very different manner. God has provided a remedy for sin which we shall consider in our final lecture.

The question may be raised, whether sin may not wreck the world purpose? What guarantee have we that the majority of created beings will not persist in sin? No logical demonstration is possible. To the Christian the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ suggest the outline of an answer. The Cross was in one aspect a real defeat of God. Sin triumphed. Righteousness was silenced. But God's power and wisdom were able to turn the very defeat into the means of victory. Sin still remained sin, but its success was overruled to be the very weapon of its destruction. Through the Cross Christ passed to new and fuller powers of salvation. He became the source of redeeming life. So the Christian can find compressed into the three days from Good Friday to Easter an epitome of the history of the universe. The Cross issuing in the Resurrection discloses a philosophy of the world in miniature.

God is able to cope with even the worst of all situations in the world that He has created. He knows all the many possibilities that the world contains and is able to overrule to His purpose whichever of them is actually realised by the free will of created beings. He can never be taken by surprise. It may be that very many beings possessed of free will whom He created will fall short of the full possibilities open to them. We may be right in regarding men not as immortal but as probationers for immortality. But in the light of the Cross, as interpreted by the Resurrection, we have a ground of confidence that the divine purpose will be carried through to some glorious end.

While the Christian doctrine of sin leaves open a belief in both the goodness and power of God, the determinist view makes a belief in a good God untenable, unless we deny any real opposition between good and evil. If a man's conduct is his inevitable response to his environment, then God is the author of sin. For He made both. It is no answer to plead that a man acts in accordance with his character, that is himself. On this view his present character has been formed by past responses of a like nature. If God could have made all men good by giving them the right disposition and the right environment, why did He not do so? No doubt the scientist and philosopher both find free will, in any real sense of the word, a nuisance. The scientist rightly and inevitably abstracts it from those aspects of reality with which he deals. Science must be determinist. We are only bound

to protest when the scientist forgets the limitations of his method or carries his conclusions into fields where they are no longer applicable. The case of philosophy is more serious. The philosopher claims to take into account the whole of experience, and hence cannot abstract free will. We can only point out that if we hold that morality involves freedom and at the same time the moral life is a real part of experience, then any philosophy which denies or explains away freedom must be condemned as failing to account for the whole of experience.

There remains for consideration the truth that is represented in the parables by the relative independence of the workers. Any philosophy that lays excessive or exclusive stress upon the immanence of God must deny the very possibility of any serious or lasting alienation from God. The Christian doctrine of creation asserts two truths, first, that all that is depends on God, and secondly that the world of relatively free spirits coexists side by side with Him.

It is clear that any form of monism or pantheism is fatal to a real belief in moral evil. So long as we confine ourselves to intellectual truth it is possible to regard each of two opposite and contradictory statements as containing elements of truth that are transcended in a higher unity that goes beyond and includes them both. So reality can be built up out of truth and counter-truth. But when we attempt to apply the same method to moral distinctions and depict the opposition between good and evil as transcended in an ultimate unity that includes

both, we are in effect abolishing all moral distinctions : we are evacuating morality of all meaning. For in the moral life good is that which ought to be and evil that which ought not to be. The whole conflict between right and wrong becomes futile and unreal. We must protest again that any philosophy that explains away moral experience is thereby condemned.

And this is no mere question of theory. Pantheism is the avowed philosophic background of certain forms of religion. Pantheism can and does provide abundance of so-called ' religious experience.' It can produce mystics. Man is exhorted to lose himself in God, to feel his kinship with the one universal life. So we find religion in abundance, but it is a religion in which there is and can be no real doctrine of sin. There can be no true moral distinctions. The one possible sin might be reluctance to submit cheerfully to the world process.

All life is equally divine. All men are by nature partakers of the divine life. In the religions of India the consequences of a pantheistic creed are apparent. Ramakrishna, a Bengali ascetic who died in 1886 and was a leader in the modern revival of Hinduism, taught : ' It is God who bids the thief break into the house ; and it is God who rouses the householder to watch for the thief.' His chief disciple and prophet, Surmi Vivekananda, who died in 1902, at the Chicago Congress of Religions, proclaimed : ' You call yourselves sinners. That is blasphemy. You are Gods ! ' He also could write : ' When I see a young mother bending over her child

I bow down before the image of God our mother. . . . When I see a harlot leaning down from her balcony, I bow before her also. I say, " Behold the mother at her sport among the children of men." '[1] The fruits of such teaching are not far to seek. Indian temples are defiled by vice practised openly in the name and under the official sanction of religion, as the local sanctuaries of Israel were in the days of the prophets. And, what is more serious, the custom is defended on pantheistic grounds. The saints and mystics of India have done extraordinarily little to improve the social and moral condition of their country. Whatever may be said against English rule in India, few will deny that it is to the Englishman that India owes the importation of two virtues that are sorely lacking, namely truthfulness and justice. The moral ineffectiveness of the religious leaders of India as contrasted with the Hebrew prophets is the direct result of their religion. It includes no hunger and thirst after righteousness and no conception of sin as an offence against a holy and loving God. There we see the fruit of pantheism when it is believed in and acted on. There can be little doubt, if it were seriously adopted as a creed by many in our own country, the same results would follow.

Or again, if we pass to certain forms of idealism, we find such stress on the immanence of God that it is difficult to see how sin can be regarded as more than a passing phase, as that which indeed ought

[1] I owe these references to Fr. Cyril Pearson of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta.

not to be, but only in the sense that it ought to be transcended as soon as possible, as a temporary but necessary means towards a higher good. Evil by being conquered becomes the means towards a good that would not otherwise have been. Christianity has always asserted that sin and moral evil not only ought not to be, in the sense that it is our duty as soon as possible to put an end to them, but that they ought never to have been. God is able indeed to overrule them to a purpose of love, but that does not make them the less evil in themselves. We shall have to develop this point in a later lecture.

We are not called upon to consider here the profound question whether creation is an eternal and essential activity of God. Even if we hold that God is always and essentially a Creator, we certainly are not compelled to believe that the existence of this particular world, still less the existence of myself or any other individual, is essential to God, so that we are in some sense as necessary to Him as He to us. 'To say that we were created for God's glory is a very different thing from saying that He could not have got on without us.'[1] Accordingly, we are able to deny that human sin is an element in the life of God. God is not the direct agent in all conduct, nor is every event, good and bad alike, a manifestation of His nature. 'It is of the essence of theism that God has, by the process which we

[1] R. Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, p. 206. In this connexion the whole chapter is worth reading as containing a criticism of the idealism of Mr. Moberly as stated in his articles in *Foundations*.

inadequately term Creation, given an existence to finite beings such that they may be said to stand in relation to Him—as His creatures, as doing His will, as alienated from or reconciled to Him or in other ways. All these are relations between God and other beings who have a status such that they must be regarded as other than He.' [1]

Further, Christianity declares that the ultimate reality is love. If this is so then it implies a certain distinction. I am indeed made in God's image. I am intended for fellowship with Him. I can rise to moral and spiritual union with Him. But this fellowship of love implies that the distinction between myself and God persists. Otherwise the possibility of fellowship ceases. The very condition which renders sin possible, renders love possible too. My ability to refuse love and obedience follows from my ability to give God something that is my own and not His. If heaven is the perfection of love, personal distinctions must abide. If I am absorbed into God, I cannot continue to serve Him. Our sense of humour, if not our sense of humility, should prevent us from a facile acquiescence in the belief that we are already and unavoidably divine.

Lastly, all true theism claims that our relation to God should be expressed not only in ontological but in ethical terms. From one point of view, no doubt, we exist in the life of God, just as stones and animals do. This existence is dependent on His

[1] Sorley, *op. cit.*, p. 494. On the whole question, see Chandler, *Scala Mundi*, with special attention to his criticism of Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God in Recent Philosophy*.

will. It presents a problem for ontology. But as moral and spiritual persons we stand in other relations to Him, which constitute a problem for ethics as well as ontology. Here we ascend on to a new level of life, on to a new plane of relationship springing from and dependent on the old relationship indeed but rising above it—relationship between persons. On this level sharing in the life of God up to the full capacity of man's created being is no longer automatic and universal. On the lower level God is equally in all forms of existence, in the stone or the animal, but on the higher level we share the life of God in so far as we grow into moral sympathy with Him, and that growth calls for personal effort and choice. If in this insistence upon the distinctness between the individual life and the life of God we lay ourselves open to the charge of thinking in terms of space, our answer is that the distinction between personalities is not a spatial or material distinction but a moral and spiritual distinction. To minimise or deny it is fatal to a belief in the ultimate reality of righteousness and love.

We have been skirting round the profound philosophical question as to whether God is to be identified with the absolute or no.[1] Into that question this is not the place to enter. We believe that the teaching of Christ and the experience of Christians postulate first that God is not limited by anything outside Himself. In that sense He is the absolute. And secondly in creation God

[1] *Cp.* Webb, *God and Personality*, Lectures vi., viii., ix.

willed to limit Himself so as to make possible for finite beings a life in real but restricted independence of Himself communicated by His own divine will. Thus He is the active ground of the universe, the source and sustainer of all that is : His supremacy is unshared. He is a worthy object of worship. On the other hand, sin really exists but is no element in the Life of God. He stands as an authoritative moral Person, distinct from and ever against the sinner. Sin is that which ought never to have been. It has no legitimate place in the systematic whole. It mediates no ultimate good which could not have been attained without it. It is always and everywhere an enemy to good. We look forward to a day in which God will be all in all, and in that day there will be no more sin.

LECTURE VI

HAS THERE BEEN A FALL?

This world is certainly a world of mystery. Its inconsistencies and incoherencies worry and perplex all who think. Its struggles and sufferings pain all who feel and love. It is a strange mixture of order and disorder. Not far below the surface we find apparent contradiction, no single and harmonious system working for the common good, but a widespread and wasteful conflict. Or, if we look into our own hearts, we are conscious of the gulf between what we have been, and what we wish that we had been. Our own self is divided and at war. From this conflict good often fails to emerge. We act and we are ashamed of our act. Of these facts two lines of explanation are possible. The first has been the well-nigh unanimous explanation of Christian teachers till quite recent days. We view a world thrown into confusion by rebellious wills. Mankind has fallen away from God's purpose. Not simply this or that man, but humanity has gone wrong. The course of human history has been very different from God's plan. Men have forfeited that full harmony with God which is the condition of right progress. To-day, however, a second and new explanation is offered largely in the name of

natural science: and one that fits in with many popular types of philosophy that regard the life of God as, in some sense, developing in and through the life of the world. On this view the world is not a cosmos which has in part become a chaos: it is rather a chaos which is gradually becoming a cosmos. Man has not fallen: he is rising. Sin is a temporary and inevitable by-product of this process of development. Its existence, or at least its conquest, is a necessary condition of growth. It is a working out of the brute. As man advances he is learning to subdue and discipline the passions that he has inherited from his animal ancestry. The apparent disorder will be resolved into order.

Before considering these two explanations, we must deliberately put aside the old idea so prominent in the theology of past generations, that Genesis witnesses to the historical existence of a so-called state of 'original righteousness.' As we have already said, the early chapters of Genesis do not give historical information. As we have repeatedly insisted, historical origins can only be proved by historical evidence. These chapters, however, do witness to a widespread belief that man's present condition is unnatural. They are evidence that he is dissatisfied with himself as he is.

The new explanation is set out from the side of science by Dr. Tennant in his *Hulsean Lectures*.[1] As we saw, he frankly admits the fact of moral disorder. He refuses to minimise the gravity of actual sin, the wilful disobedience to God's com-

[1] *The Origin and Propagation of Sin.*

mands. He recognises that such sin is possible and widespread. But he denies altogether anything of the nature of 'original sin,' or that man's sense of dissatisfaction with himself is a proof of anything like a 'fall' in the past.

On his view man first became conscious of sin when he became aware of something in the nature of law binding upon him. This law, in the shape of tribal custom, conflicted with his own natural impulses. In so far as it expressed an ideal for his life, he began to be dissatisfied with himself. He contrasted his present state with that higher condition to which he desired to advance. He began to feel ashamed of impulses which were indeed useful and necessary at the earlier stages of evolution, but this sense of shame was the first step in learning to control them. 'Man fell . . . when he first became conscious of the conflict of freedom and conscience. To the evolutionist sin is not an innovation but is the survival or misuse of habits and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage of development, whether of the individual or of the race, and were not originally sinful but actually useful. Their sinfulness lies in their anachronism: in their resistance to the evolutionary and divine force that makes for moral development and righteousness.'[1] Or again, 'It was natural, if not inevitable, to identify the universality of sin with its heredity, so long as thought was dominated by the idea that man's first estate was one of moral

[1] Quoted with approval from an address by Canon J. M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

excellence or innocence, of natural or miraculous harmony of quiescent flesh and calmly ruling spirit. The evil of his heart could only then be supposed to come through the corruption of his once pure and passionless being. But for us there has emerged an alternative view of man's original condition. What if he were flesh before spirit; lawless, impulse-governed organism, fulfilling as such the nature necessarily his, and therefore the life God willed for him in his earliest age, until his moral consciousness was awakened to start him, heavily weighted with the inherited load, not indeed of abnormal or corrupted nature, but of non-moral and necessary animal instinct and self-assertive tendency on that race-long struggle of flesh with spirit and spirit with flesh, which for us, alas! becomes but another name for the life of sin? On such a view man's moral evil would be the consequence of no defection from his endowment, natural or miraculous, at the start: it would bespeak, rather, the present non-attainment of his final goal.'[1]

In criticising this statement we must begin by making clear that we entirely accept Dr. Tennant's position up to a certain point. Science has beyond all reasonable doubt been able to account for the raw material out of which human life is made. And this material, the instincts and impulses that we inherit, is non-moral. In itself it is not sinful. But we are yet a long way off the problem of sin. The problem of sin, as we have seen, resides in the will. Science accounts for the material with which

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 10–11.

the will has to deal. It explains how temptation inevitably arises, temptation for which the individual is in no sense personally responsible, temptation that is in no sense the result of past sin, and may well be part of God's purpose—but it explains no more. Temptation is not sin. The awareness of imperfection is not sin. Sin arises, not when a man becomes conscious of a law as binding upon himself and compares his personal unsatisfactory state with what he would fain become, but when, having recognised the law as binding, he refuses obedience to it. Sin is not imperfection, but the refusal to advance, the refusal to grow towards perfection. The problem of original sin is not the universal presence of impulses that need control and easily become sin, but the universal failure of men to control their impulse for which they feel that they are responsible. Further, Dr. Tennant fails to discuss the results of sin. He does, indeed, point out the absurdity of the Pelagian position that sin has no effect on character and leaves the sinner as free as he was before. But my sin affects not only me but others. It taints not only my life but the life of others. It introduces disorder into the moral world and into the physical world too. If we believe that in any true sense, when we rise up to the level of human life, fellowship with God is the indispensable condition of all true advance, then it is clear that consequences follow to which science can adduce no parallel from animal life. We are moving on a new plane, and the final court of appeal is the evidence of the men and women

who are the experts in the life of fellowship with God. On this level a comparison with angels would be more useful than a comparison with apes.

Again, if we turn to science itself, science can be quoted as suggesting a much less optimistic view of human nature. We are told that as we follow the upward development of life in this world many species have, as it were, made false steps. They have chosen the easier road and been content to adapt themselves so thoroughly to their present environment that they have reached a state of equilibrium. Advance is no longer possible. They remain stationary. And the inevitable result of this refusal to co-operate with the upward movement is, in the long run, death. The forward track, once deserted, can never be regained. When sooner or later changes occur in the environment they have become incapable of corresponding. So the penalty for the refusal to adventure themselves on the upward course is, for the race, extinction.[1]

We may apply this to the spiritual evolution of the human race. It is perfectly conceivable that the race as a whole has failed to live up to God's purpose. It has developed along wrong lines. Its evolution has been misdirected. No doubt there is this important difference in dealing with the human race. A new factor has appeared, the unit of moral life is no longer the race but the individual member of the race. The will, which can alone cause sin in the full sense, resides in the individual.

[1] For this view see McDowall, *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*.

But as we saw, the individual is interpenetrated by the race. Moral tradition has an overwhelmingly important part to play in the make-up of human nature. Through suggestion it shapes even the will. Our humanity is not purely individual, even in its moral personality. If this is so, if the race is evolving along wrong lines due to misdirection in the past, the individual, even though he is in no sense personally responsible, is barred out from God. Each member bears the burden of the misdirection of the race. He is not personally guilty, but he suffers from that moral and spiritual disability which we call original sin. Now, if this view represents the truth, original sin is indeed the grave matter that Christian theology has always supposed. It is no passing weakness that mankind will outgrow. No regression is possible. In nature, steps made in the wrong direction cannot be retraced. Humanity can never save itself. It can never get back on to the right lines.

That this is the truer statement we most firmly believe, and in support of it we appeal to the facts both of the individual life and the world at large.

As I look into my own past, I know that this cannot be the best world, the world in all respects that God meant it to be, because I have had opportunities of making it better and have not taken them, or again, because I have chosen a course of action that I knew to be wrong. I am as sure that I have committed this sin and that as of any fact in my whole life. My conscience delivers its message with a clearness that allows of no doubt. And I know that

this is so not only in my own case, but in the case of thousands of others, and those who are most conscious, not simply of moral disability or of imperfection but of sin, include all those men and women without exception who have been judged by those who knew them to be living closest to Christ. Who can limit the consequences of these acts of sin? Further, we observe that, as a matter of simple fact, as men grow older they do not necessarily and always grow better. They advance, no doubt, in many ways. They gain a riper wisdom, a greater power of appreciation and discernment in dealing with the good things of this world; but side by side with the growth of intellectual or artistic abilities or the development of a capacity to make more of present opportunities, we do not always find a corresponding growth in love and unselfishness. Truth and righteousness do not always go hand in hand with worldly experience. Old men do not always say their prayers with greater reality. If Christianity is true, it means that qualities such as love, righteousness, truth, and spirituality are those that alone abide in eternity. No doubt the pleasures of sin often grow stale. Sinning has been compared to 'drinking sea-water to quench thirst.' But even when a man has learnt that sin is unprofitable and unsatisfying, he cannot always give it up. He finds himself in the grip of evil habits that will not let him go and that disable him for the higher life. It is a shallow optimism to suppose that men automatically outgrow the taste for sin.

Turning to the world at large, we find the same

facts on a grander scale. Man has made great advances in knowledge and culture. He has advanced in material prosperity. His moral ideals, too, have advanced. They are more complex. A social organisation has been developed which makes possible, at least for a large number, a great enrichment of life. But all this progress is not necessarily moral and spiritual progress, nor is it in the least inconsistent with a belief in 'original sin.' Scripture suggests what science affirms, that primitive man was a savage, naked and ignorant. The pictures of a state of 'original righteousness,' in which he was endowed with all knowledge, are fancies destitute of any basis of solid fact. The truth which is contained in the phrase 'original righteousness' is that God's purpose for man was a life of union with Himself, very different from his present condition. Whether that purpose was in actual fact at one period realised up to a certain stage on this earth, or whether its realisation was perverted from the very moment that man appeared, through the action of evil wills other than human, we must leave open. At most 'original righteousness' suggests that up to a point the human race went forward on the right lines of development. Man may not have risen far above the beasts, but he was all that God intended him to be at that particular stage. History and science can prove that man has developed in many directions, but they cannot prove that the lines on which he has actually developed were the only lines possible to him or that they correspond fully with the divine purpose. Rather, everything points

to the fact that progress has been retarded by selfishness and sloth. Man's advance has not been uniform or consistent. Material progress has been largely independent of moral and spiritual progress. Man as he is to-day has been well compared to a being with the body of a giant and the soul of a pigmy.

As we saw above, moral goodness depends not on wide knowledge or elaborate moral ideals, but on entire faithfulness to the best that is known. A child or a savage may be holy. A professor may be learned and cultured, but unholy because he is unfaithful to his wider vision of truth. Judged by the Christian standard, the poor and ignorant savage may be living closer to God than the civilised man. Our culture is largely based on the use of machinery, including means of locomotion. We are gaining an increasing mastery over the forces of the physical world. The war demonstrated, what we knew before, that knowledge apart from love and righteousness may be equally used to forward or destroy life. Every advance in science can be employed in the service of good or evil. Education divorced from moral training produces the clever criminal. Science impartially lends her aid to construct a hospital or a Zeppelin. Behind all mechanism and laboratories there stands human nature. Many are wondering whether man's inventions have not so far outrun his moral strength that they will destroy him. He has forged weapons that offer gigantic temptations to hatred and greed, and those temptations are not always resisted.

The problem lies in man himself. If we look round our modern cities we see that the outward splendour of civilisation is, as a matter of actual fact, paid for at the cost of many human lives. Thousands are living in slums where any decent existence is impossible. Our triumphs in electricity serve to convey us with unparalleled rapidity from overcrowding and vice in Battersea to overcrowding and vice in Hoxton. We can find money for expensive amusements, but not for healthy houses. In short, we have the knowledge and the means that would go far to remedy acknowledged evils, but we have not the will. We could get a far happier England in a few months if men would lay aside all suspicions and jealousy, all desire for selfish profit or pleasure, and set to work to reform abuses, even if individuals were the poorer by the process. There is nothing external that prevents it. The weakness lies in the hearts of men. We do not love our neighbours as ourselves. It is sin in its many forms that holds us back and blinds our eyes to tolerate evils that could be soon abolished if a sufficient number of people wished to do so and were prepared to make the sacrifice. What explanation can we give of this moral inability? The Christian answer is that the root of the trouble lies in the will of man. We have lost that union with God and vision of His glory which could alone inspire us with the enterprise and vigour to cope with the situation. In other words, something like a falling away from God's purpose for the race can best account for the failure of man's moral and

spiritual growth to keep pace with his intellectual and material development.

We can make no terms with any suggestion that sin in any form is a means of promoting human advance. Sin is always the enemy of happiness and progress. Not the actuality but the possibility of sin is the necessary condition of moral growth. It is true that God's love and wisdom do overrule even sin to the forwarding of His purposes, but that is very different from saying that sin was necessary for the fulfilment of those purposes. 'There never was an evil action performed, but that a good one in its place would have led to better results. Sin is wrong, but God's action in reference to it is right, and from right action springs good. The soul of goodness which is in things evil is the presence of the indwelling God, and it is from that fountain of light that the good flows forth, and not from the darkness of sin.' [1] The only alternative to the view that mankind has fallen away from a full realisation of the divine purpose is to suppose that, say, the late war was a necessary factor in the evolution of the world, or that the Cross was a part of the predestined world order. It raises great moral difficulties to find the cause of such war in anything short of rebellion against the love and wisdom of God, or to suppose that God crucified Himself on Calvary.

Once again certainly St. Paul and the great majority of Christian teachers have believed that behind the world of men there lay a world of

[1] Dinsmore, *Atonement in Life and Literature*, p. 244.

spiritual beings, some of whom are in rebellion against God. No doubt the devil has often been caricatured. But if we set aside foolish and superstitious representations, it still remains a real possibility that there is behind the veil of sense a world of evil wills able to influence mankind and thwart God's purpose. This is no solution to the ultimate problem of evil. It only puts it a stage further back. If the devil tempted man, who tempted the devil? No doubt many modern psychologists suggest that all such belief in evil spirits is a projection of conflicting desires that are really to be found within the soul. Voices and visions of the Evil One can be explained in terms of psychology. But neither of these facts rules out the ultimate possibility of an evil will or wills at work in the unseen. Such a view has certainly commended itself to the saints. And much of our Lord's teaching about temptation implies a similar belief. We may regard such teaching as metaphorica lor a concession to popular belief, or again we may suppose that our Lord in His incarnate life accepted this belief as He did other beliefs of His day as part of the mental furniture of His time, because it expressed metaphorically a real truth. We should not dare to say that anyone who accepted such a position was disloyal to Christ. On such a question no final evidence can be produced. Certainly the existence of other spiritual beings besides man in God's universe can never be disproved. It shows a suburban mind in these days to maintain that the whole universe must have been designed

solely for man's benefit. But there is one small piece of evidence that must be taken into account. It has seemed to some thinkers as, for instance, to Mr. Webb,[1] that the apparently pointless suffering of nature can best be explained on the hypothesis that some such evil will has disturbed the unfolding of God's purposes in nature. Dr. Sorley, in his Gifford Lectures, argues with great force that an imperfect world was needed for the moral education of mankind.[2] We can all understand the value of effort and suffering, that man can only come to his full stature by struggling against adversities and overcoming obstacles. We can appreciate the need of pain. But is it sufficient to call this present world an 'imperfect' world? There is so much suffering that seems utterly and entirely purposeless. Who is morally the better, say, for the massacre of the Armenians? or for the lingering horrors of cancer? It may be replied that much suffering is due to human sin. That is no doubt true to a far greater extent than we suppose at first sight. But human sin cannot be held responsible for the sufferings of animals before man appeared, or for so-called 'dysteleology' in Nature, where she seems to put forth all her ingenuity in adaptations and contrivances to inflict suffering and disease.[3] Facts of this kind afford an objective argument for the existence of hostile influences able to disarrange the processes of evolution. The author of 'Evil and

[1] *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, pp. 269–71.
[2] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, pp. 346 ff. and 515–16.
[3] For a popular statement of this view see Wells, *The Undying Fire*, pp. 89–104.

Evolution' attempted to trace out in detail how things that are evil in nature may have become so. For example, 'Evolutionists are agreed that it is just the fierce struggle of created things that has produced these birds and beasts of prey, and that there can be little doubt that it is the malignity of the struggle that has produced the venom of so many reptiles.'[1] It is worth noticing that Scripture regards the redemption wrought by Christ as extending to all creation. Our modern knowledge makes clear that the human nature which He assumed has a native kinship with the beasts and the lower creation of which such writers did not dream. This truth illuminates St. Paul's hope that the Incarnation would be in a real sense a means of redemption to them as to us.

Finally, as we consider the facts of life, we would suggest that the truer conclusion to base upon such a survey would be, not that sin is being outgrown, or that the brute is gradually getting worked out, but rather that the distinction between good and evil is becoming increasingly apparent. In the Parable of the Tares we get the nearest approach in all the teaching of Christ to any explanation of the origin of evil. 'An enemy hath done this.' The world is a strange mixture of good and evil, not because the full harvest has not yet arrived, but because side by side with the wheat have been sown the tares. They cannot now be plucked up without endangering the original sowing.

[1] *Evil and Evolution*, p. 142. The whole book deserves consideration.

But as each seed develops, its true nature will become increasingly clear, until at the end separation will be effected. That is the philosophy of life that we have tried to maintain, not to deny the presence of the tares, nor to maintain that their presence is beneficial to the wheat, nor to cherish an unfounded hope that they will one day turn into wheat, but to hold that this intermixture of good and bad goes far back into the past and was not the work of the farmer but it is due to the interference of an enemy. As time goes on, the distinction between wheat and tares becomes increasingly clear and a final separation will be ultimately possible.[1]

To sum up, without in any way denying the progress of mankind we hold that the highest kind of progress has been prevented by a falling away from the true line of advance. Evil has come into the world and shows no signs of being outgrown. Sin is that which not only ought not to be, but ought never to have been. The disorder of the world may well be in part due to evil influences other than human. But we believe that even though sin cannot be automatically outgrown, it is being increasingly distinguished. Man will in the long run be compelled to take sides openly for good or evil. When the new order appears, only those who have so lived here as to correspond with its demand for righteousness will be able to enter into and enjoy its fullness.

[1] *Cf.* Quick, *Essays in Orthodoxy*, c. iv.

LECTURE VII

GOD'S REMEDY FOR SIN

CHRISTIANITY claims to provide the remedy for sin. Before we consider the remedy, it will be best to recall what we have seen to be the true nature of sin.

Sin is the disorder of man's inward being. He was made to know and serve God, to co-operate with God in the carrying out of a great purpose and in that co-operation to find the satisfaction of his whole nature. Fellowship with God was to be the controlling and inspiring factor of his life on earth. Through such fellowship he was to become truly and fully human. His capacities were to be developed in due order and proportion. His desires were to be educated and his will trained so as to issue in right action for the glory of God and the good of man. He was to feel an even deeper hunger and thirst after righteousness that he might know increasingly the blessedness of being filled. He was to love God with all his heart, and all his mind, and all his soul, and all his strength, and his neighbour as himself, so that no power of love should be dissipated in rival and contradictory affections. In such love he was to grow, and growing to become

more like the God in whose image he was formed, and so capable of a closer union with Him. For God is love. The world was to be a great family circle living in fellowship with one another and with God, united in the common effort to carry forward the divine purpose and explore the riches of the divine wisdom. That plan has been thrown into confusion by the refusal by mankind of that trust and love, which, just because it was trust and love, they must be free to refuse. Accordingly in whatever way it has come to be, man finds himself deprived of that full control and inspiration of fellowship with God which was to guide and unify his life. The elements of instinct out of which all conduct is built up have been misdirected. Wrong complexes have been formed. Often he has ideals that he knows to be best and has not the energy to attain them. He is out of sympathy with God and God's purposes. He fails to find satisfaction and peace. He does not love his neighbour. Competition has largely taken the place of co-operation. The objects that he has come to desire are such that they can often only be obtained and enjoyed at the cost of the loss and suffering of his fellow men. His mind is clouded; he seeks vision and hope. And the cause of all this lies in man himself. He is unable to save himself because he is his own enemy. It is not this or that man who is a sinner but the race as a whole is infected with the taint of moral disease. No child that is born into it can escape the influence. That is why human ability can find no remedy. Nothing more nor less is needed than the remaking

of human nature, the refashioning of the race; and man can no more remake himself than make himself.

This impotence of man is shown by a consideration of the remedies that are suggested. His present condition is often put down to bad environment and it is proposed to remedy it by new laws and better conditions of life. No one would wish to deny that a large amount of human degradation is due to bad surroundings, want of food, want of air, overcrowding and the like. Nor again can we deny that new systems of government might do much to sweep away conditions that cramp and pervert human life. They might pass laws to discourage great moral evils, to make drunkenness and gambling painful and difficult. But when we admit this, we have not got near the bottom of the problem. Mere change of outward surroundings will be insufficient by itself. Men and women can be as quarrelsome, as selfish, as covetous in palaces as in hovels. The love and purity of God may be more effectively obscured in the drawing-rooms of the smart set than in the slums. Further, the very environment whose ill-effects we deplore is largely the creation of man himself. To establish and to maintain a better environment, we require better men. So too with laws. Whatever constitution we have, its working must depend on the energy and fairness of our political leaders. Whatever laws we have must be dependent for their administration on human integrity and human vigilance. The problem is always at bottom the problem of

character. In bad institutions and bad conditions of life we are really up against original sin in one of its forms.

The same is true of education. If we use the term in its narrower sense, it is abundantly clear that the mere increase of knowledge will not produce a happier world. Our education may easily produce a race of clever devils. Knowledge in itself is a good thing; it is indispensable for the higher life, but like all other good things it may be misused. If we use the term education in its true sense, education would indeed re-create the race. But whence can we get such education? We are merely re-stating the problem. 'The disciple is not above his master.' The teacher cannot give that which he has not got. Education in its true sense is the drawing out and organising on right lines of all the latent possibilities of the infant. Where can the power be found to do that and to rule out all the subtle influences that make for evil? Where can the right social environment be obtained? What men have always needed is a power from outside, able to quicken and arouse, but not supplant the moral energy of their own lives.

Our belief is that in Jesus Christ, God Himself has intervened to meet the needs of men. He has supplied exactly what men require. He has reconciled the world to Himself. He has afforded the possibility of a new start. 'If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature'; or 'there is a new creation.' He has founded a new society, a new race, a new people of God to be the nursing home of a new

humanity. That has been the claim of the Church from the first.

First, then, in Jesus Christ we have a revelation of the possibilities of human nature. We see one who is perfect man at every stage of His development. His life is full of energy and power. All the instincts of human nature are harmonised. The balance between them is maintained in a strong and vigorous life. There is no inner conflict, no rebellious passion or impulse within, no waste of energy. Temptation comes, but it comes from without. It finds indeed a ground of appeal. The tempter suggests that some lawful and innocent desire should be satisfied in an unlawful way, but never for one single moment does Christ's human will falter. This unity and harmony of life is very far from being attained by the absence of tasks to be faced or obstacles to be overcome. Christ's life is certainly no pale or featureless existence. It is crowded with activity and energy. The secret of its peace and strength lies in His union with the Father who sent Him. From His earliest years He lives as a son, yielding the complete trust and obedience that the Father's holy love demands. He shows what fellowship with God can be to one who trusts and obeys Him absolutely. Every power of His nature finds its true satisfaction in being consecrated to the task of forwarding the Kingdom of Heaven. His whole being is guided and inspired by an obedient fellowship with the Father. His loyalty and obedience are perfected by the Cross. In Him we see the example of what

man was intended to be in the purpose of God. We see a human nature developed on sound lines under the controlling and inspiring influences of perfect union with God and free from all moral disease and all taint of racial evil.[1] This example has always served to bring home to men their condition. For the first time in the Incarnation the full consequences of sin are made apparent, because we can place side by side what we are with what we were meant to be. In the presence of Christ the hatefulness of sin is clear. In so far as He is taken as the ideal of human life, the sense of sin is aroused. Men are made dissatisfied with themselves.

Again, Jesus Christ is the great revelation not only of man but of God. He is the ' visible portrait of the invisible God.' In Him we see God expressing Himself in terms of human life. This, as we have already seen, gives a new meaning to sin. It opens our eyes to what we do when we sin. The Cross is the disclosure of God's love wounded by our sin. When we reject the love and claims of God we crucify Christ afresh and put Him to an open shame. The Cross is the revelation in time of an element in the eternal life of God. Once more, as a matter of simple fact, nothing has brought home to men the meaning of sin more than the Cross.

Further, we have assumed throughout these lectures that there is an objective standard of righteousness by which actions can be tested, and

[1] The fact is here simply recorded on the evidence supplied by the New Testament. This is not the place to discuss how such freedom from original sin was possible in one who was truly man.

that it is possible to know the will and character of God. For Christians that assumption rests on the supreme revelation of God in Christ. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' As against the shifting standards of a merely human morality and the uncertain deliverances of a merely social conscience, we set the pattern of human life as lived out by God Himself in Christ and as expounded in His teaching. No doubt, even so, problems of conduct arise. Christ laid down not laws but principles. There is need to apply His teaching to the ever-changing circumstances of modern times. We search the Gospels in vain for precise directions. Just because He taught for all time, He did not give detailed regulations for His own or for any other generation. But He promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. So it still remains true that for us the nature of sin is for ever revealed as that which conflicts with the standard and principles of Christ, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the conscience of the Christian society and of the individual. Sin is not a mere breach of rules. It is a state of the inner man that is out of harmony with God as manifested in Christ. St. Paul often insists that the Law, the disclosure of God's will in a code of definite ordinances, brought home to men the sinfulness of sin and the sense of their own weakness. If it is true of the law, that inability to live up to its commands brought into the light man's alienation from God, much more is it true of Christ.

In Christ we have a living person who claims unlimited obedience. Obedience to a living Master

is a far more searching test than obedience to a code. A personal appeal is far more exacting than an impersonal law. And Christ demands not only the fulfilment of external obligations by a precise and ordered conduct, but faith and love which involve the surrender of the whole man, the affections and will. Formal and outward obedience, such as might seem to satisfy the claims of the Law, are insufficient. The claim of love is unlimited. In short, by itself the example of Christ's human life and the searching inward demands of His teaching might seem to provoke despair rather than hope. It could only serve to show up the moral infirmity of mankind, to make men aware of the impassable gulf between what they are and what they should be. An example, taken by itself, can provide no remedy for sin.

Christianity offers, however, not only an example but a living Saviour. Of all moral forces it is usually agreed that personal influence is the greatest. When a man has gone wrong, the first question that arises is, Who are his friends? Psychologists lay the utmost stress on the part played by great personalities in carrying forward the moral tradition of the race.

In Christ we see personal influence raised to its highest pitch. He is the ideal friend. The power of His example is communicated to others by Himself. He is a living Saviour, not a dead Teacher. He is able not only to convince men of sin but to deliver them from it, to re-make them in His own likeness by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

The ideal of Christianity, unlike that of the Stoics, is not the repression of emotions but the redirection of them into new and fruitful channels. In 'Ecce Homo' Professor Seeley anticipated modern psychology in insisting on the positive nature of all sound living. Speaking of the contrast between the water-baptism of John and the baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire, which he foretold as the peculiar gift of Christ, he asks, 'How can warmth cleanse? The answer is that moral warmth does cleanse. No heart is pure that is not passionate. No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic. And such an enthusiastic virtue Christ was to introduce.' It is a deduction from Christ's own teaching about the impossibility of an empty heart. A real part of the work of Christ in delivering mankind from sin was to set before them as focussed in Himself a cause worthy to enlist all their energies and to engage all their affections. He Himself lived and died for the kingdom of God. He showed in His own life and work the power and beauty of that kingdom in which He claimed that He Himself would be at the right hand of power. He inspired His disciples with the twofold idea of loyalty to Himself and to the Kingdom for which He stood, and to forward which He gave His life. So in the vision of God's kingdom, the rule of righteousness and love, He set before men a great cause to which they might give themselves, and in giving themselves find deliverance from the power and attractiveness of sin. Again, there is no power in the world greater than that of love. But love can only be evoked

by a worthy object. In Christ we find one who is able to arouse even in the outcast and degraded a love capable of lifting them up to new levels of life. Christianity is largely built on gratitude to the Son of God, who discovered to me the worth of my own personality in that He 'loved me and gave Himself for me.' Christ knew what has been called the 'expulsive power of a new affection.' The sinner cannot keep his sins and Christ. And more than this, Christ by His supreme personal influence, and by the gratitude He evokes, not only gives to men a new power to reorganise their life and to redirect their impulses in a cause in which true and lasting satisfaction is obtained, but in doing this He is reconciling men to God. He sets them not only at peace with themselves but at peace with God. In drawing men to Himself He is drawing men to God. For the whole Incarnation is a great act of God in man. The influence of Christ is nothing short of the grace of God Himself. The unique intimacy that He offers to each human soul is that vital intimacy that is only possible between the soul and its Creator. In short, in Christ we see God offering to man that fellowship with Himself which we saw to be the condition of all full and healthy human life. Christ is the grace of God made visible, God seeking and saving the lost, God entering into human life and bringing a new power of recovery. Other religions offer to men high ideals and noble visions, but only Christianity has a gospel for the weak and fallen. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

God's work in redemption is on a level with God's work in creation. Through the Incarnation and the Cross God came to remake the world that had gone astray from the divine purpose.

We have insisted that Christ is a living Saviour. The New Testament also insists with equal clearness that the grace and power of Christ live on through the Holy Spirit in the society which he founded, the Church which is His body, the new Israel, the people of God. The Christian Church is the visible representative, the sacramental expression on earth of mankind as remade by the grace of Christ. Just as the race is the medium through which the taint of original sin is transmitted, so the Church is to be the medium through which the grace and power of the living Christ are to be handed on. As we saw, to be ' in Christ ' means far more than to be united to Christ by a merely individual faith. It means membership in His body, the Church. All that modern psychology teaches us about the possibilities of the group mind or about the capacity of membership in an organised society for raising men above themselves and their limitations, is ideally fulfilled in the Church. By Baptism the individual is transferred from the realm of the merely human, the sphere of unregenerate humanity, into a new realm, the divine society, the sphere of grace. There he is to grow up into the full stature of the child of God, interpenetrated by the life of the Body of Christ, sustained by spiritual food, taught by the Holy Spirit. His faculties and impulses are to be trained and directed into the

right channels. He is to learn to devote all his energies to a cause in which they will find true and harmonious satisfaction, namely the cause of God's kingdom, for the furtherance of which the Church exists. His whole life is mediated by fellowship in the Christian brotherhood. Love of God and love of the brethren are not two separate activities: rather it is in and through love of the brethren that the love of God is learned and deepened. As man is created a social being, so he is recreated as a social being. The sacraments, the appointed means of grace, are all social acts. Christ lives on on earth in His body, the Church, filled with His Spirit, and it is as members of the body that Christians are saved. This truth is doubtless obscured by the imperfection and sinfulness of the Church. Not only has the Church not yet come to its full stature, but in its visible fellowship it includes evil as well as good. But it still remains true that ideally and in the purpose of God the Church is mankind in the process of being renewed in Christ, and that the corporate life of the Church is charged with the saving energy of Christ Himself. God's remedy is not a single act of redeeming power, but a new life bestowed by a new birth and developed in a new home. The life of the Church is more than the corporate life of a human society —it is rather human life raised to a supernatural level by divine grace and becoming for the first time fully human by its union with God. The very means which the powers of evil have used to propagate sin are used by God to propagate

life. As in Adam we die, so in Christ we are made alive.

There still remains the problem of forgiveness. Religion is a personal relationship, and, as a matter of fact, we have personally sinned against our Heavenly Father by acts of disobedience. Fellowship with God is impossible without God's forgiveness. The child in a human home is miserable and unable to share the old intimacy with its parent until, after confessing its wrong-doing, it has been assured of the father's forgiveness. The same need is felt in religion. And forgiveness is no easy matter even in human life. When we deal with rebellion against God, if we take God's claims upon us seriously, the difficulty of forgiveness is felt to be overwhelming. Many have regarded divine pardon as impossible. Yet Christ claimed to forgive sins as one who had the power and the will to do all that was necessary to make forgiveness possible. By His identification of Himself with the 'Suffering Servant' He taught His disciples to view His death as an atoning sacrifice. In the institution of the Eucharist He interpreted His death in advance as being the inauguration of a new covenant.

The writers of the New Testament unanimously believe that the death of Christ actually and eternally achieved what the sacrifices of the old covenant only prefigured—that by the 'blood' of Christ, to use the metaphor that came naturally to their lips, men are truly reconciled to God, who has put away their sins. The Cross not only represents but achieves the permanent possibility

of forgiveness for all mankind. It is not our place here to discuss the manner of the Atonement or the many theories that have been put forward about it. It is sufficient to insist that they all, even the crudest, have been attempts to make clear to men's conscience that Christ has done whatever is necessary to make possible God's forgiveness of sin. In the days when the power of evil spirits was a real and present terror to men's souls, Christ's death was viewed as abolishing for ever any hold that they had usurped over the lives of men. In days when God was viewed as the supreme feudal chieftain, Christ's death was regarded as paying to the full that homage which was rightly due to Him and of which He had been unlawfully deprived by the sins of men. At a later date Christ has been represented as offering to God as our representative and in our name a full confession of sin and a perfect offering of vicarious penitence. It would be rash to deny that all such views contain some measure of truth; we must be content now to point out that they all agree in setting forward Christ crucified as the ground of forgiveness. Further, Christian tradition is unanimous in holding that Christ left to the Church the power to forgive sins in His name. Absolution brings home to the individual the personal application to himself of the forgiveness won by Christ. His full membership in the Christian brotherhood, the body of Christ, to which he is restored by absolution, is an abiding assurance that as a member of Christ, he shares in the blessings won by the Head. Mental analysis may bring to

light moral disease and moral failure. The practice of confession has been in some degree an anticipation of modern methods of healing in so far as it has insisted on the need of facing out unpleasant and shameful facts.[1] The mental analyst brings back unity to the life by reassociation : the repressed complex is linked up with the conscious life, the perverted instinct is sublimated. Absolution can add what the mental analyst cannot add, the certainty of God's forgiveness for wilful sin and the assurance of fellowship with God through fellowship in the body of Christ. The Church's dealing with sin goes to the root of the matter, if once it is granted that sin is against God.

Lastly, we have seen that the consequences of sin are not limited to the sinner. Not only does he suffer the degradation of his own character, but his wrong action increases the disorder of the world. The result of even a slight sin may be very far-reaching. Accordingly before the sinner can be fully at peace with himself, he needs to be assured not only of his own personal forgiveness, but that the evil which he has wrought in the lives of others can be remedied. In one sense the past can never be undone. But even as in his own case he has found that through repentance his own sin can be, as it were, transfigured by God's forgiveness so that he can now look on it as forgiven, and through pardon

[1] This needs qualification. Confession can only deal with the conscious life. Mental analysis deals also with the unconscious life and brings up moral conditions of which the individual by himself could never become aware. At the same time confession should prevent repressions.

he has entered into a closer fellowship with God, so he desires that the disastrous effect of his own sin on others and on the world may be transformed by the redeeming power of God. That is one reason why a merely subjective view of the Atonement is so unsatisfying. In the Cross of Christ we find the ground of hope that to God even this is possible. We see there the very sin of man made the material of God's greatest triumph, and so we may believe that God is able to overrule even our sins in so far as they affect others to His glory. That does not mean that sin is ever right or necessary, but it does mean that even sin is not outside the power of God. In Christ crucified we may see an inexhaustible power of salvation for ourselves and for the whole world, a redeeming energy that is able to counteract and overrule even the consequences of sinful human wills. St. Paul did not limit the reconciling work of Christ to mankind. He speaks of the whole creation as being 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,'[1] or of God's purpose 'to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth.'[2] He seems to know of no limit to the efficacy of God's grace. We may therefore find in the Cross God's promise that He will do all that is possible to undo the mischief wrought by our sins.

To sum up, the aim of these lectures has been to show that in its essential nature the problem of sin remains unaffected by modern knowledge.

[1] Romans viii. 21. [2] Ephesians i. 10.

Sin is still sin against God. It still needs redemption and forgiveness, and we believe that in Christ alone we have the remedy for the situation. We can still repeat the old text, 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.'

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